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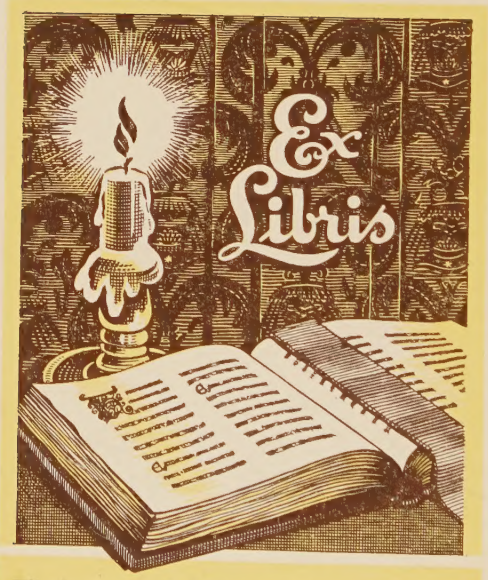

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THE ANTHOLOGY
OF ANOTHER TOWN

VENTURES IN COMMON SENSE

BY E. W. HOWE

With an Introduction by H. L. Mencken

"A man thoroughly American, . . . he yet manages to get the method of the free spirit into his study of the phenomena that lie about him, and even into his examination of the thing that he is himself. In him is the rare quality of honesty — a quality, in fact, so seldom encountered in American writing that it would be stretching the truth but little to say that it is never encountered at all."— *H. L. Mencken.*

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THE ANTHOLOGY OF ANOTHER TOWN

By E. W. HOWE

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THE ANTHOLOGY
OF ANOTHER TOWN

When I was a little boy, living on a farm, my father returned one evening from the country town where he had been several days, and announced that he had bought the weekly paper printed there. I had no idea what a printing office was like, but soon had opportunity to find out, for the next morning I was taken to town, and turned over to the foreman, who was told to make a printer of me.

The man who taught me the trade was an old-fashioned printer named Martin, who had a bed in the office, and who wrote stories for the New York *Mercury*, played the guitar, sang ballads, and took part in amateur theatricals.

My brother Jim worked with me, and we worshipped Mr. Martin. He gave us little suppers in the office at night, when we had rare things to eat we had heard of, but never hoped to taste; including cove oysters with little round crackers, instead of the big square kind. At the conclusion of these suppers, Mr. Martin told us stories. Usually we became so sleepy that he was compelled to drag us into his bed, and spend the night himself on a pallet on the floor.

Among other things this wonderful man told us

about was the circus; he had seen one, although there had never been one in the town where we lived. But one day, after Mr. Martin had gone away for good, and Jim and I were doing the mechanical work on the paper with the assistance of the editor, the advance agent of a circus came to town in a wagon; in those days circuses travelled overland, there being few railroads, and none at all in our section.

We were tremendously excited, as Mr. Martin had said printers always received free tickets. Much to our dismay, however, father had a quarrel with the agent. Father was a preacher, and said circuses were immoral; therefore no picture of an elephant should appear in his paper. What was more, he said he would use his influence to keep people away from the circus man's demoralizing exhibition.

It was a terrible blow, but father kept his word: he attacked the circus with as much violence as he attacked the institution of slavery, a question then prominent. So Jim and I looked at the bills, and wondered if we should be able to see the show.

When circus day arrived, father told us we were to work all day, and not see the crowds, or the parade. The attack of the editor on the circus did not do it any harm; indeed, early on the morning of circus day, the town was crowded with country people from many miles around. And every farmer who came into the printing office to pay his subscription, made jokes

with the editor, who was somewhat surly because his good advice had not been taken. It was the town's first circus, and we soon discovered that it was also the town's greatest crowd. Teams began arriving in the vacant lot back of the printing office at an early hour; the horses were hurriedly unhitched, and the owners went away to see and mingle in the excitement. In the front office the editor was having an uncomfortable time with farmers who thought it a great joke on the paper that its abuse of the circus had brought an enormous crowd.

While the editor was arguing angrily with a number of men about the iniquity of the circus, and the men were laughing merrily, I told Jim I intended to make a sneak, and see the circus, if I died for it. Jim was a good boy, and warned me not to, but when he saw I was determined, he accompanied me in the wild run we made for liberty.

When we reached the street, we found the circus had not yet arrived, so we set out with a number of other boys to meet it. We knew it was to come in on The Falls road; every boy knew that, somehow, so we travelled that way until we became suspicious, and turned back. Reaching town, tired and hungry, we found the circus had arrived by another road, and that the parade, and the afternoon performance, were over.

We were hungry, but didn't dare go home, so we

hunted up a woman we had known in the country, and she gave us something to eat. Then we started out to borrow money with which to attend the evening performance. But we didn't make any progress, so when the band struck up for the night show, we decided to crawl under the tent. It seemed easy, and I was about in when a man caught me by the heels, and pulled me out. While the circus man was cuffing me, I saw another circus man cuffing Jim, about twenty feet away; he had also failed.

Then we met a man named McCurry, a member of my father's church; a good man who did not intend to witness the wicked performance, but who was nevertheless walking around outside, to see the crowds, and hear the band. We appealed to him; we said we had run off, and would get a whipping, but that it would be terrible to get a beating, and not see the performance.

Mr. McCurry looked around, to see no one was watching, and said:

"Well, I don't want your father to know it, but I'll loan you the money."

A few minutes later we were on the inside of the palace of pleasure, whistling with the other boys, and demanding that the circus men appear, for the performance had not yet commenced. But when it did begin, it was all we expected, and more. It was

Miles Orton's circus, I remember, and the clown was a merry fellow called Doctor Gilkerson.

Delight succeeded delight for an hour, when the proceedings were interrupted by a drunken man. We didn't know him; there was only one drunkard, Fin Wilkerson, in our neighbourhood. We supposed the new drunkard had wandered into town from some other neighbourhood, owing to the circus, and were in sympathy with the ring master, who attempted to throw the man out. But the man wouldn't be thrown out, and seemed determined to make trouble. He said he had known the clown, Doctor Gilkerson, when they were boys, and wanted to talk to him.

About this time Doctor Gilkerson came in, and said he didn't know the dissipated man. But the man insisted, and finally they patched up an acquaintance. We were disposed at first to be annoyed by the interruption of the stranger, but when Doctor Gilkerson shook hands with him, and threw him head over heels, we roared with laughter.

It seemed Doctor Gilkerson had known the fellow very well; they had gone to school together as boys, somewhere, and after they had talked awhile, Doctor Gilkerson asked:

"By-the-way, what has become of old Howe, who used to teach school down there?"

"Why," replied the drunken man, "don't you know? He's running a newspaper about the size of

a postage stamp here, and has become so good that he won't print circus advertisements."

It was the first joke on a citizen ever heard in a show in the town, and the people almost suffocated with merriment, they were so pleased. The show was brought to a standstill by the merriment of the people over the joke on the editor, and Jim and I were amused, too; we were getting something to offset the whipping we expected later.

At last the people were satisfied with the joke on the editor, and we thought the performance would be resumed. But the clown's friend still insisted on being sociable with the show people, and there were cries of "Put him out!" But the man wouldn't go out, and wanted to ride a horse that stood in the ring. I had been thinking I could ride it, as the horse had a big flat pad on its back. Doctor Gilkerson was in favour of letting the intruder ride, but the ring master said he would kill himself.

"All right," said the merry man, "let him kill himself. That's a good way to get rid of him."

It was finally agreed to let the stranger try, and away went the horse and the band, with the drunken man on the horse's back. It was tremendously exciting; the man reeled and staggered a good deal, and the people in the audience were mightily pleased that a man from the country, and drunk at that, could do it.

Then the man managed to stand on his feet, and take off his coat. This was exciting; but a dreadful thing happened at that time: the man being intoxicated, and not knowing what he was doing, began taking off his pants! Much to my surprise, the circus men did not stop him, and before we all died of mortification, the man got his pants off, and turned out to be a circus rider in tights.

We felt mighty cheap when we realized we had been beautifully fooled, but we enjoyed that, too, along with the joke on the editor, and everybody had a good time.

But at last the show was over, and Jim and I hung around an hour or more, dreading to go home; we knew what was coming to us. There was a sideshow, and the barker was busy while the main tent was being torn down. I wanted to see the sideshow, but had no money, and finally thought of a scheme: I had heard that if a printer displayed his rule to the doorkeeper of a show, the doorkeeper would let him in free. I tried it, and the doorkeeper in an amused way, looked at me, laughed, and said:

"Well, it's all right! Go on in!"

Probably he had been a printer's devil himself; anyway, he let me in. He tried to stop Jim, who hadn't his rule with him, but I said:

"That's all right; he has one, but left it at home."

So Jim got in free, too, and I felt mighty important. The sideshow didn't amount to much; it was nothing more than a lot of stereopticon views of the war, then going on, and we were soon confronted with the necessity of going home, and taking our whipping. On the way, I got into a row with a boy belonging to the circus, and he pushed me, and I pushed as hard as he did, and said if he wanted any more, to come on. Jim thought I was a tremendous dare devil. Jim was older than I, but he always followed me everywhere; had I stirred up a fight with the circus men, he would have followed me, and done the best he could, but he couldn't have done much, as he was always a weakly boy.

The last wagon drove away about two o'clock in the morning, and then there was nothing left for us but to go home. So we sneaked in at the kitchen door; we imagined mother would leave that open for us, and found she had. After entering the kitchen, there was a door leading into the sitting room, and then a stairway leading up to our room. We had gone around the house, and noted a light in the sitting room; that's where we expected trouble. After entering the kitchen, we tried the knob of the sitting room door, and attempted to turn it quietly. Ever notice how a door knob squeaks when you try to turn it quietly? That door knob squeaked, and when we turned it, opened the door, and went into the sitting

room, there sat the editor, waiting for us. I went in first, and Jim sneaked in behind me.

"Well," father said, "you've been to the circus?"

There was no use trying to deceive him; I was willing to try, but knew it was impossible, so I replied, meekly:

"Yes, sir."

He thought awhile, as though trying to decide just how hard he would whip us, and finally inquired:

"How did you like it?"

I was too wise a boy to be enthusiastic, under the circumstances, so I replied:

"O, I didn't think it amounted to much." (I did, though; it was the very best show I ever saw in my life.)

For some reason the editor didn't grab us, and begin the punishment we expected, and he had no switch.

"Did they say anything about me?" he asked.

I hadn't thought of that before, but evidently he had been expecting an attack. I repeated what the clown had said, making it as mild as possible.

"How did the people take it?" he asked again.

Then I had an idea; so I replied with animation:

"Well, sir, you should have been there, and seen how the people took it! Bill Hillman, the sheriff, walked down to the ring, and shook his fist at the clown, and said the people wouldn't stand for low

circus people abusing a prominent man like you. And Mr. Cuddy, the banker, he walked down to the ring, too, and told the circus men what he thought of them. He said you were one of the most useful men in this town, and that people looked up to you, and that they didn't want to hear any more of that."

The editor was evidently pleased; still he delayed the whipping.

"Well," he said at last, after thinking awhile, "hurry up to bed. We've a big day's work ahead of us tomorrow."

When we got into bed, we chuckled softly, and Jim nudged me with his elbow, and said I was certainly the boldest, wisest boy the country ever produced.

And we paid back Mr. McCurry next day, with ducks we stole from mother, and later we fixed it all right with her: she never was hard on us as father was. When we told her how we fooled father, she said it was a shame, but we caught her laughing about it afterwards.

So little that is really exciting or worth while has happened in my life that I am greatly interested in Jim and Dan Ayres, who run the restaurant. Something really happened to them; I never before heard of boys going anywhere and finding excitement as great as they expected.

When they were boys they lived on a farm in Virginia; I have heard them say their postoffice was Sudley Springs. One morning their father started them to Sunday school, and after they had loitered along the way a mile or two, Jim Ayres remarked a commotion over beyond what they called the Big Woods.

"What's that?" Jim asked, stopping.

It was getting late by this time, and Dan replied:

"I don't know, but we'd better hurry to Sunday school, or we'll get a whipping."

Then they hurried on, but the commotion over beyond the Big Woods broke out again; faintly, but it was very unusual, and Jim stopped and listened. He had never heard anything like it before, although he was a big boy twelve years old, and after listening awhile, said:

"I'm going over there."

"Better not," Dan said. "You know father whips hard."

But the strange commotion continued, so Jim said he was going, whipping or no whipping. Dan followed, but kept saying they would catch it when they returned home.

They walked, and walked, and walked. All the time the commotion over beyond the Big Woods became more pronounced, but they couldn't tell what it was. They forded streams, and were chased by strange dogs, but kept on; from ten o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. They had nothing to eat, and they didn't know that they could ever find their way back, because they were in a country strange to them. But they kept on, and a little after three o'clock, as a reward for their perseverance, they walked into the battle of Bull Run.

Although I have always worked as an editor and printer, it has been in country printing offices, and I would know no more about working on a city newspaper than I know about building or repairing telephone lines. In the country printing offices we do everything: reporting, editing, soliciting, job work, writing cards of thanks, making rollers of glue and molasses, and running the engine or press on occasion. All these things I have done, as proprietor, devil and editor, until I can almost do them with my eyes shut.

But one day a real Journalist drifted into the country newspaper office where I was editor and owner. He was a specialist; a real live wire, and had worked in a big town. His name was George Coulter, and his specialty was the subscription department. He was also a writer; indeed, he gave me to understand that when he worked in Denver, on the *Tribune*, there was some question as to whether George Coulter or Eugene Field would finally become noted. But George Coulter finally preferred the Business End, and as our subscription list needed help, we put him on. He soon convinced me that our way was old-fashioned and ineffective, which I had long suspected, and he at

once introduced his new ideas, although we never noticed much change.

Coulter was a little man, and there were wide spaces between his front teeth. His health was never very good, and as he was thin as well as short, his head was so small that the bows of the man-size spectacles he wore wrapped twice around his ears. It developed that the other employés, who had never had experience in a big town, and had drifted into the front office from the press room or composing room, were as good as Coulter, but we all rather liked him, and as his pay didn't amount to much, kept him.

Soon after George Coulter's arrival we met his wife; a tall, stout woman probably sixty-five years old. Coulter was not to exceed thirty, and really didn't amount to much, but I have never known another husband to be admired as he was. Mrs. Coulter was a doctor, and had been married before; I heard of two previous husbands, both of them doctors. Whether she had had others I do not know, but she worshipped George, and believed him to be a great journalist. She occasionally irritated me by giving the impression that the prosperity of the paper was due to her husband's efforts, but she was a kindly old woman, and I let her believe that Coulter did what the rest of us were doing, and had been doing many years before he came.

I discovered, also, that the domestic relations of

Mr. and Mrs. Coulter were not always happy. Coulter frequently went on the road to solicit subscriptions; by going into a territory where the paper was not very well known, he sometimes did very well, and was useful in a way; but I discovered that before starting on these trips, he usually had a difference with his wife.

And his wife was so distressed about it! She seemed to be to blame; anyway, she took the blame, and often came to me, and begged me to coax Coulter to return to her. He was working on a commission basis, and we never paid much attention when he came and went; we never really cared whether he ever came back. But his wife loved him sincerely, and, as she had money, earned in practising a profession learned from her other husbands, she brought money to me, and asked me to send it to Coulter, that he might come home. She feared he might be ill on the road, and poor, and, as he was very sensitive, she felt that maybe he was staying away from her because he hadn't a new suit of clothes. So I often sent him his wife's money, when there was none coming to him from the office, and he would come back, and loiter around in his listless way a few weeks, and then disappear again.

Coulter was really a disagreeable problem to us, but he was inoffensive, and drifted along from month to month. He didn't act as though he felt superior

to his associates at the office, but he certainly felt superior to his stout wife, and I often wondered she didn't make him behave himself, as she was really quite a woman, and had a good practice.

When Coulter returned from one of his long trips, I noticed he didn't look very well. After appearing at the office every day for a week or two, he disappeared, but I supposed he was mad at his wife again about something, and had gone away. A week later, however, I heard he was ill. I had a distinct consciousness that I should go to see him, but was very busy, and kept putting it off from day to day.

One morning, a strange little girl appeared at the counter with a note for me. Somehow I had a feeling that the note was from Mrs. Coulter, and that her husband was worse. Then I felt guilty because I had not called to see her before.

It turned out as I feared; Coulter was not only worse: he was dead, and Mrs. Coulter asked in the note that I come to see her. Feeling guilty, I went at once.

She lived over the jewellery store, on the main street, and when I climbed the stairway softly, and rapped at the door, was admitted.

Mrs. Coulter was in a pitiful state of grief, and I was thoroughly ashamed of myself because I had neglected her. It also developed that she was almost in need; she had been unable to practise during her

husband's illness, and asked if I would not help her provide a coffin in which to send the body to a brother who lived in another town. I cheerfully agreed to do this, and comforted the distressed widow as much as I could.

The body was lying in the room, on a board supported by two chairs, and I thought it no more than decent to look at poor George, but when I raised the sheet with which his body was covered, I encountered his feet, instead of his face, and was compelled to try again.

Mrs. Coulter told me what a wonderful man her husband was; how journalism had been robbed of one of its ornaments, and how he was just getting started in the world when death cut him off. I accepted all she said, as people do under such circumstances, and added a comforting word myself, although the actual facts were that Coulter, during his lifetime, had not amounted to much.

Then I went away to make the funeral arrangements. Arriving at the undertaker's, I felt so ashamed because of my neglect of Coulter that I bought a very good casket, and resolved to have a choir, and a funeral service. Mrs. Coulter intended leaving with the body on a late afternoon train, so I had plenty of time, and went at once to the most popular preacher in town. When I told him how friendless Coulter was, the preacher readily agreed

to officiate at the funeral, and helped me make up a quartet to sing appropriate hymns. The soprano and contralto hadn't much to do, and as they were friends of mine I had no trouble in securing their consent by telephone.

I had some trouble with the tenor and bass. Both of them worked for employers who were often bothered by requests to let the singers off, but I called on these employers, and, by telling them what a good fellow Coulter was, they not only agreed to let the singers off, but promised to attend the services I had arranged.

Then I went to work on the pall bearers. I picked out five of the most prominent men in town, determined that Mrs. Coulter should be satisfied with the funeral I had arranged, however much she resented my neglect to call during her husband's illness. The men I picked out as pall bearers were very kind, and readily consented to act, when I explained the case; men are always very nice about such things.

The funeral was to occur at 5 P. M., and the men who were to act with me as pall bearers were instructed to meet at that hour at the foot of the stairway leading up to Mrs. Coulter's rooms over the jewellery store. They were all there promptly, except Balie Waggener, the lawyer. When he didn't come I recalled that he was always promising to deliver public addresses, and then failing to appear, but I

hadn't time to be indignant, for the hour of the funeral had arrived, and we lacked a pall bearer. The bankers I had selected to assist were also indignant because of Balie's failure to appear, and said that was the way he did in everything. But just then Sam Kelsey, the mayor, came along. I wondered I had forgotten the mayor, so we grabbed him, and explained that we needed him. He had just lit a fifteen cent cigar, but threw it away, after taking a few regretful puffs, and we hurried him up the stairs ahead of us.

Sam Kelsey, the mayor, was a noted lodgeman and old soldier, and knew just what to do at a funeral, so he at once took charge. All the pall bearers, except the mayor, sent flowers, as had the two employers who had excused the tenor and bass to sing in the quartet. The members of the quartet were present, as was the preacher, and two girls from the office. Mrs. Coulter had always believed the girls at the office flirted with her husband, although they really abominated him, but in the presence of death she forgave all, and had her arms about one of them.

Sam Kelsey, being experienced, saw that we were ready to begin, so he made a signal to the members of the quartet, and they sang two beautiful selections. It was really very impressive, and Mrs. Coulter shook with emotion; indeed, all of us were moved. Mrs. Coulter evidently thought the leading men of the town

were paying George the attention he deserved, now that he was dead, and her grief greatly moved me, for she was really fond of her husband. Sam Kelsey tiptoed over to Mrs. Coulter during the singing, and spoke a comforting word to her, and if any of the pall bearers did not know how to act, he gently and quietly put them right.

The preacher spoke impressively of the dead; I had given him an idea of the life of the deceased, making it as favourable as possible; and, after the quartet sang another hymn, Sam Kelsey, the mayor, knew it was time to carry the casket down the stairway to the hearse, which had backed up to the sidewalk. So he arranged the pall bearers according to size, and, at a signal from him, we picked up the casket, and carried it reverently down the stairs, depositing it in the hearse.

My idea was to cut across lots, meet the hearse at the depot, and put the casket in the baggage car, but Sam Kelsey wouldn't have it that way: he lined us up on either side of the hearse, three on a side, and, after squinting along the lines, to see that we were properly placed, he gave a signal to the driver of the hearse, and we walked with measured tread to the depot.

We had on white cotton gloves, much too long for us in every finger, but altogether we made a rather impressive procession, with Mrs. Coulter and the

two girls from the office following in a carriage.

Arriving at the depot, we placed the casket on a truck, and wheeled it to the baggage car. It was a very hot day, but Sam Kelsey made us remove our hats while taking the casket from the hearse to the baggage car. The casket was very heavy, and it was hard work getting it into the car, but finally this was accomplished, and the flowers placed on the casket. Then we stood around in solemn silence for a moment, before departing, and Sam Kelsey, with his hat still off, wiped a lot of perspiration from the top of his bald head, and, leaning over to me, whispered in a tender, sympathetic way:

"Who was he?"

Among the children in the school I attended in the country when a boy were the five Hemingway boys, particular friends of mine. Their father was killed at Shiloh, and when I went to their house to stay all night and found their mother in bad humour I forgave it, as people said the death of Mr. Hemingway had ruined her disposition. Besides, she had seven children, and only one of them was a girl and she was married and lived in a distant state.

One of the Hemingway boys, Sammy, the oldest one, didn't go to school. He was simple-minded, owing to the doctor giving him strong medicine when he was a baby, it was said, so he remained at home and made boots. His father had been a bootmaker before he went away to the war, and Sammy had assisted him. When the father went away it was discovered that Sammy knew the trade, and after that he made the boots for the men and boys in the neighbourhood. Most of the men and boys in our section wore rough boots made by Sammy Hemingway. When a man became a little more prosperous than the others he ordered kip boots, with red tops, and Sammy Hemingway made these too.

When I needed new boots I was sent to Mrs. Hem-

ingway's, where Sammy measured me; when my old boots needed repairing I was also sent there, where I took off my boots and sat in the room with Sammy until the repairs were completed.

I therefore knew Sammy pretty well, but never knew his mother very well until I began going there to stay all night with her boys, two of whom were near my own age. When we arrived from school we always found Mrs. Hemingway fretful, but the boys would whisper to me that she would be all right after a while, so we kept out of her way and did the evening chores.

Sammy was twenty-five years old, and had black-whiskers all over his face, which his mother trimmed occasionally. She also cut his hair and made his clothes. When supper was ready Mrs. Hemingway would put food on his plate, and he would eat it, but he never asked for more. Indeed, he couldn't talk very well, and it was necessary to lead him to the table, and to his room upstairs.

When there were no boots to make or shoes to mend Sammy was led to his room and locked up. When a customer came his mother went for Sammy, and he seemed to understand what was wanted; he had learned it from his father, and measured, and pegged, and sewed, until the work was done. Then he was locked up again.

But though Mrs. Hemingway was always in a bad

humour when I went there to stay all night she gradually became better natured toward evening; and when all the work was done she would sit about the fire with us and tell about the people she used to know in Indiana, where she came from. By eight o'clock she was as good-natured a woman as I ever knew, and said she was glad I came, and insisted that I come often.

Sammy never paid any attention to me; when we children played in the evening he pegged away at his bootmaking without looking up. His workbench was in the main sitting room at one end of the fireplace, and we paid no more attention to Sammy than he paid to us. If he ran out of work he would go over to his mother, tug at her dress and indicate that he was ready to go to his room and be locked up. Occasionally at night when we children went upstairs to bed Mrs. Hemingway would give us the key to Sammy's room, that we might go in and see that he was all right. If he were awake we found him convulsively working his hands, as he always did when not mending or making boots; if he were asleep his right hand was always lying across his forehead, as though he had a pain there. If Sammy ever disturbed any one it was his mother, for no one else ever took any care of him or knew much about him.

One day when I asked permission of my mother to stay all night with the Hemingway boys she refused,

saying Mrs. Hemingway was poorly. After that Mrs. Hemingway's sickness became the topic of conversation for months, and I learned that her fretfulness was due to the fact that she had long been a sufferer from some serious malady. She grew gradually worse, and had no one to help her. The neighbour women took turn about calling on her every day, straightening up, but finally it became apparent that some one must remain with her all the time, which the women could ill afford as they had big families of their own.

About this time I heard that Mrs. Hemingway's married daughter in Indiana had been sent for. It was the custom when any one went to town to bring home mail for the entire neighbourhood, which was distributed by the children. After that when we met any one coming from town we asked if Mrs. Hemingway's letter had come, for Mrs. Hemingway was growing weaker and greatly needed her daughter.

At last the long-expected letter came; father brought it from town one afternoon, and while I hurried over to her house with it the other children went to the houses of other neighbours, and told them the good news—that Mrs. Hemingway's letter had at last arrived.

When I arrived at the Hemingway house and knocked, Sammy was sitting near the door making boots, but paid no attention to me, but his mother, who was lying in a bed in the same room, told me to come

in. She looked dreadfully pale and weak, and asked me to read the letter. It was full of affection, and the writer said she would start three days later. Mrs. Hemingway told me to carry the letter at once to my father, which I did, and he decided that it would be necessary for him to start for the railroad that night in order to meet her.

When I took the letter to Mrs. Hemingway's I noticed that Sammy, though he was simpleminded, seemed to realize that something was wrong with his mother. My bringing the letter excited him, and he quit his bootmaking and went over to his mother and put his hand on her forehead, and moaned like a child in pain. When he returned to his chair he swayed to and fro and forgot about his bootmaking for a time, and I was compelled to hurry out of the room, to keep from crying, it was so pitiful.

After that we watched the road for signs of the visitor, for Mrs. Hemingway was very bad off; but when the visitor did arrive, bringing two little girls with her, things seemed to go better at the Hemingways'. The daughter, whose name was Latimer, straightened things out, and made her mother more comfortable. Mrs. Latimer was one of the nicest women we had ever seen, and the manner in which she was up with her mother night and day won us all.

After Mrs. Latimer had been there a month people began to wonder how Mr. Latimer took it; there were

predictions that he wouldn't like doing the milking and the cooking, and one day when Mr. Latimer arrived we thought he had come after his wife, and to make a fuss. But he hadn't; he had come to help his wife and Mrs. Hemingway. We heard of his going to town after delicacies for Mrs. Hemingway, and on returning from these trips he always brought things for the Hemingway boys too.

Soon after his arrival I was sent over to ask how Mrs. Hemingway was. She wasn't any better; in fact she was a great deal worse, and didn't know me. Even Sammy had noticed some great change, for while I was there he rose from his bench, went over to his mother's bed and tried to induce her to get up.

Mr. Latimer was in the room, and his patience and gentleness greatly attracted me; I had not been accustomed to that sort of thing. His fondness for his wife and her fondness for him also surprised me. I was sent to Mrs. Hemingway's many times after that to inquire how she was, and Mr. and Mrs. Latimer's devotion to each other was a wonderful thing; I had never before seen wives and husbands who seemed to think a great deal of each other.

One night word came to our house that Mrs. Hemingway was dead, and I went with my father to ring the bell. It was the custom in our neighbourhood to toll the church bell when there was a death, one ring for each year of the deceased's age. I sat shivering

in the church until my father tolled the bell fifty-seven times, and then we went home. As we walked along through the darkness, returning home from tolling the bell, my father told me that one day during Mrs. Hemingway's illness she asked that all leave the room except Mr. Latimer. When she was alone with him she asked as her dying request that he be good to Sammy. And Mr. Latimer promised, and my father seemed much moved by the incident, as I think all the people in the neighbourhood were. The gentleness and kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Latimer did us all good.

The day after the funeral Mr. Latimer announced that he intended taking the family back to his home in Indiana. Mrs. Hemingway had requested it, and he thought it was as little as he could do; so on the fourth morning after the death they started, Sammy sitting on his shoemaker's bench and the boys climbing all over the wagon.

And then, after saying good-bye, about the only good husband ever known in our neighbourhood drove away.

DAVIS STRAIGHT

When I was ten years old my Uncle Joe came to our house on his wedding journey, driving a pair of little mules to a farm wagon; and it was arranged that I should accompany him home and visit my grandmother, who lived five miles from his house, in the Grand River hills.

Uncle Joe's bride didn't like me very well, and I didn't stay long at their house; Uncle Joe soon took me over to my grandmother's, who had a son only a little older than I was; a boy named Nate, a noted hunter, for he had killed wild turkeys.

Nate never did do much but hunt, but I was kept pretty busy at home and greatly enjoyed the vacation. We went hunting every day, but Nate said I had brought him bad luck, for we didn't find any turkeys; nor much else except a few squirrels. We were the idlest pair of vagabonds in that entire section, and a certain boy living in the same neighbourhood caused us a good deal of annoyance. He was a famous good boy named Davis Straight, and some sort of a distant relation of ours; but we didn't like him, he was so industrious and well-behaved. We were always being told how industrious and worthy Davis Straight was, and wherever we went we met him on the road

driving a wagon loaded with wood; and every time we met him he had a turkey or wild goose on the wagon. He had run into the game accidentally, while at work; we couldn't do it, hunt as hard as we would.

But one day we sneaked up to a little lake in the Grand River bottom, and there sat a wild goose with its head under water poking round for wild celery. I was so anxious to get a goose that I let Nate shoot, though it was my turn. He had an old shotgun, and was a noted shot with it, and while he was taking aim I thought as rapidly as they say a drowning man does; I made up my mind to tell the other boys, when I returned home, that there were two geese, and that I got them both.

Just then there was a muffled report and Nate fell over on the ground with his fingers in his mouth; the gun had burst, and the goose flew away.

Nate wasn't much hurt, and we started home, carrying the heavy gun, though there weren't enough gunsmiths in the world to do anything with it; it had burst at the breach. We had put in a goose-and-turkey load, and put in too much.

Of course we met Davis Straight on the way home with a load of wood. He had a wild turkey, which he had run into accidentally and shot without any delay; otherwise he wouldn't have stopped. He was such a good boy that he always returned home when expected—or earlier—ready to be at something else,

and shame Nate and me. Davis Straight was my Aunt Beckie's stepson, and I never could understand how she tolerated him.

Having no gun, time didn't pass very rapidly, and Nate and I became quarrelsome; indeed we came near having a fight one day. So grandmother said it was time for me to go home.

It was forty miles to where I lived through an almost unbroken country, but I was mad at Nate, so I struck out to walk home, without bidding Nate goodbye. Grandmother said it was a shame the way we acted, but Nate started it; I remember that.

I left in the afternoon, intending to spend the night at Uncle Joe's, who lived five miles on the way. Aunt Mary wasn't very glad to see me, though she was a bride, but I told her she needn't worry; that I intended leaving at daylight next morning. Uncle Joe talked of taking me part way in the wagon, saying that it was a shame for me to walk home after coming so far to see them, but Aunt Mary soon put a stop to that talk; she seemed to run things round that house. Aunt Mary was a Brassfield, and the Brassfields thought a good deal of themselves; I think they opposed her marrying Uncle Joe in the first place.

I liked the way she talked so little that I got up at daylight and started without eating any breakfast. Uncle Joe was a good deal exercised about my starting out on foot; he always was the best one in the

family. But he couldn't help himself; he was afraid of Aunt Mary, who didn't like me.

I intended stopping that night at George Meek's, a neighbour of ours before we moved to town. That left thirty miles for me to walk from daylight to dark; but I didn't think much of it—before I started and when I was mad at Nate. There were only a few houses on the way, and the road ran mostly through prairie.

About noon I passed a house and went in, asking for a drink of water, but really hoping they would give me something to eat. They were just sitting down to the table, and the man asked me to eat with them.

I thought I must be polite a while, and said: "No, thank you."

Unfortunately the man took me at my word, and said: "Well, of course, if you don't want anything, all right, but you're welcome to it."

I sat and watched them eat a while, and then went out to the bars and cried because I was such a fool. But I had to make it to George Meek's before dark, as there were panthers in the woods round his place, the big boys said; so I started on my weary way again.

In the middle of the afternoon I passed through a little town called Bancroft, a collection of half a dozen houses and a store. When I went into the store the proprietor was eating candied cherries out

of a jar. I was hungry but had no money, and would not beg. The man dropped one of the cherries, and I was just about to dart after it, when he mashed it with his foot. He was the burliest ruffian I ever saw.

The walk nearly killed me, and I dragged myself into George Meek's house about dark. They knew me well, and were surprised when I told them how far I had walked. They offered me food but I couldn't eat much, and went to bed, sick.

The next day I had a high fever, and my father was sent for. He came the second day with a horse and buggy, to take me home. I lay down in the bottom of the buggy on a quilt, and father was disposed to grumble because I had made myself sick.

When we reached home mother was waiting at the front gate.

"Where's Ed?" she asked anxiously.

For some reason father replied: "He was too sick to bring home."

Mother turned toward the house hurriedly, to get her bonnet and shawl, and said: "You needn't put up the horse; I am going right back after him."

There had never been much affection in our family, father was so stern and busy, and her saying that made me cry. She heard me sobbing, and she came back and took me into the house, where I told her exactly how Nate and Aunt Mary and grandmother had treated me.

The smartest banker in this part of the country, it is generally said round town, is Sam Harris. Unfortunately he has one very bad habit: Occasionally he goes down to the city and engages in dissipation. At such times he takes with him a long pistol kept in the bank in case of burglars, and it is always feared he will shoot some one.

Ordinarily he is a very thrifty man, locally noted for getting all that is coming to him; and we country people talk a good deal about that, too, as well as his occasional sprees.

He has a fine family, and when he goes off on the rampage his wife hurries to her particular friends and begs that they drop their work and go and look after him. They don't like to do it, but they all like Margaret, and usually consent.

The last time Sam gave way to his weakness it was Link Morrill's turn to go to the city, look him up, care for him, and bring him back safe to his family, to sober up. Link grumbled a good deal about going and said he couldn't afford the time, but he had known Margaret since she was a baby, almost, and couldn't resist her tearful appeal.

So Link went to the city, soon found Sam by going

to the roughest part of town, and took charge of him.

As they walked along down near the union depot they passed an auction store where cigars were being sold. The auctioneer was a loud-voiced man, and said he proposed to open a box of the cigars and throw them into the crowd, in order that the gentlemen present might each get one, smoke it and realize the extra quality. The auctioneer intimated very broadly that the goods he was offering had been smuggled into the country without paying duty, and that he was offering twenty-cent cigars for whatever they would bring.

The talk about giving something away attracted Sam Harris' attention, in spite of his condition, and he went into the auction room, Link following to look after him. Again the auctioneer said he would throw a box of the valuable cigars in the crowd, in order that those present might realize their extra quality. Suiting the action to the word he threw a box into the crowd.

Immediately there was a great scramble; those in the room went into a heap on the floor, wrestling round after the free cigars, and Link says it was very rough. Sam Harris promptly engaged in the scuffle and pushed and rushed with the roughest of the rough men. Link says it was the toughest bunch he ever saw.

The free samples being disposed of, the auctioneer

began offering cigars like them for sale, and Link and Sam went out. As they walked on down the street trying to reach a safe part of town Link frankly told Sam he ought to be ashamed of himself; that though he was a great banker, a good citizen and the head of a fine family, his friends were through chasing after him when he went on the rampage, and that in the future he might depend on looking after himself. Link had long wanted to talk to Sam plainly, and accepted this occasion.

About this time Sam took a cigar from his vest pocket and lighted it. Link wanted a cigar also, and not having one of his own took one from Sam's pocket. In doing so he found all his pockets full, and was curious to know how many he had managed to get in the rough scramble at the auction store. He counted, and found Sam had thirty-two.

Link says if Sam hadn't been drunk he would have got all of them.

BART WHERRY

Our people are distressed because Bart Wherry, the lawyer, will move to the county seat and open an office there. We don't like to lose a good citizen, particularly one like Bart Wherry, who has become rather noted over the state because of his speeches in conventions and at notable court trials.

So a committee called on him to see if anything could be done. It turned out nothing could be done; Bart is going away. He talked quite frankly to members of the committee. It seems he is tired of keeping Charley Millard down.

Charley Millard is a man of about Bart's age, and in Bart's employ; he sits in the outer office and tells callers when Bart will be at leisure. In addition he keeps the books and looks after the collections.

Charley Millard does not really amount to a great deal, having tried practising law for himself, but when Bart Wherry wins a big case we all say Charley Millard really won it; that he looked up the law and told Bart what to say in the trial. When Bart makes a speech at a convention and the papers ring with it, we say Charley Millard wrote the speech; that he is bookish, while Bart is not.

Charley Millard's wife also believes her husband

should have the reputation as a lawyer enjoyed by his employer, and in the course of a long time Bart has become tired of the talk. So he is going to the county seat to open an office.

Charley Millard wanted to go along and occupy his old position, but Bart said to him: "No, Charley, you have already done too much for me. I want you to take the position in the legal world your talents deserve. And at the same time I expect Fin. Wilkinson to be nominated this fall for President of the United States. It has always been said of Fin. that were it not for whisky he would occupy the first position in the gift of the people. Now that no more liquor is to be had let Fin. come through with you."

PILSON BLAIR

A good many observers say Pilson Blair is enjoying his second wife as much as the Widow Sayer enjoys the life insurance she collected from the lodge.

Though we are excited in this town nearly every day because of a rumour that something is likely to happen before night, it usually blows over, and we find there was not a great deal in the talk in the first place.

But one day a bomb exploded without the slightest preliminary warning: Ben Barton and his wife Emily parted.

We had known them for years, and they seemed to get along as well as any respectable married couple. They had a nice home and three interesting children. Ben was prosperous, and generally said to be a coming man; his wife was a model of propriety, and belonged to an excellent family. But there was no doubt of the truth of the report. Ben went to the home of his parents to live, and Emily remained in the house where their children were born; in a little while they applied quietly to the court, and were divorced on account of incompatibility.

Both Ben and Emily were naturally quiet and dignified, and since neither of them volunteered any information we were afraid to ask them. So for a year the cause of the trouble between them was the town mystery.

A start was finally made by Tom Wyman, who made a trip to the city with Ben, and while they had nothing else to do talked about a little of everything except the divorce. But Tom did say to Ben that though Emily had talked rather freely to her women friends about their differences she had said nothing that prevented the boys from being on his side.

Tom had not really heard of Emily saying anything, but thought he would try that, and it worked first rate. Ben took a good deal of interest in the statement that his former wife had been talking about him, and, though he didn't say anything definite, as soon as Tom returned home he saw to it that some of the women said to Emily that though Ben had been talking rather freely to the men they were on her side. She also took a good deal of interest, and by degrees we got the whole story. Ben told his side, and Emily told hers, fully and freely.

I know only Ben's side, which I have heard him tell, and perhaps this will be sufficient.

Ben says his wife not only insisted on keeping a cow but sold milk, and he didn't like it, as it was an intimation that he didn't provide his wife with a reasonable amount of spending money. Nor was this all; though they kept a hired man and servant girl the cow was very troublesome. Ben says he rarely went home in the evening that there wasn't some row about the cow not coming up or the children failing to de-

liver the milk. If it wasn't that it was a dispute about tickets, and one time a woman in the neighbourhood made a great row over the milk sent her, saying a preservative had been put into it, which made her baby so ill she was compelled to send for a doctor. There was some talk of arresting Ben, though he had always been opposed to keeping a cow and particularly to selling milk.

All this made Ben very angry, so he said to his wife they didn't seem to be cut out for the milk business; that the cow had long annoyed him and that since he was doing well he would cheerfully buy all the milk the family needed. Ben confessed he talked more freely to Emily than he had ever done before, but thought he had at least settled the cow question for ever; the animal was sold at a sacrifice, and he heard no more about the matter for three months.

Then a man came to Ben and said they might as well understand each other; that Ben's cow had broken into his garden and damaged things so much that he would no longer stand it. Ben replied that he had no cow, but the man proved he had. It seemed that Emily had bought another cow without her husband's knowledge, kept it in a neighbour's barn and was again selling milk.

One word brought on another, with the result that they parted.

As I have already admitted, I do not know Emily's side of the story, which I regret; I would like to hear her explanation of one charge made by her former husband, and which investigation reveals to be true.

She has been free from Ben two years, and has plenty of means; she has a barn and a hired man, but since her husband left the house she has not kept a cow.

LIGE BANTA

When I was a boy, a noted character in our village was an old bachelor named Lige Banta.

There had long been jokes about Lige Banta's bachelorhood, as he kept bachelor's hall; and he seemed to do pretty well at it, for he was a fat and good-natured man of about forty. He ran a butcher shop, and it rarely happened that any one bought meat of him without mentioning the marrying joke. Lige rather liked the banter of the people, and always said he didn't marry because no one would have him.

But it was reported one day that Lige was actually to be married, and the rumour attracted much attention. Finally the name of the woman came out. Lige, to the surprise of everybody, admitted that this time the story was true, after many false alarms, and that he would be married early on a certain Thursday morning, and take the stage for Chillicothe on his wedding trip.

I had a consuming desire to witness the marriage, never having seen one. I wondered what the ceremony was like, and had a notion that it was something wonderful. Lige Banta was a friend of mine, and I often put myself in his way, but he didn't invite me.

Finally I made up my mind that I must see that wedding ceremony or die of curiosity.

The morning the wedding was to take place I overslept, and was not able to put on my Sunday suit; I only had time to slip on my everyday clothes, which consisted of a pair of pants, a hickory shirt and a straw hat. Hurrying into this costume I ran all the way to the part of the town where the marriage was to take place, without knowing exactly how I was to get in. Arriving in front of the house I saw people entering, and gradually worked up to the door. At last, when I thought it must be time for the ceremony, a belated guest hurried up, and when he went in I went in with him.

There were ten or fifteen men and women sitting round, and my appearance amused them. It was summertime, and my pantaloons were rolled up at the bottom, showing brown legs and bare feet. I had on galluses, and my hat was an old straw affair that was very decidedly out of place at a wedding. The guests though greatly amused didn't know I hadn't been invited and didn't put me out.

Fortunately attention was soon drawn from me; a side door opened and Lige came out with his bride. I can't recall her name; she probably belonged to a family I didn't know very well. The man I came in with turned out to be the preacher, and he stepped up to read the ceremony.

I was greatly disappointed; it didn't amount to anything, and I half regretted coming. After the ceremony the guests went up and congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Banta and I followed their example. By this time I was attracting more attention than the bride and groom, the preacher and the bride's kin. Lige didn't seem to care, and I thought I might find opportunity to take him off to one side and explain matters.

The bride's kin had prepared a wedding breakfast, and when it was ready they invited me out with the others. They had lots of fun with me, and heaped my plate with things to eat, but as I had a ravenous appetite they didn't have any more fun with me than I had with them. It happened that there was a vacant seat next to the bride, and I was assigned to that. I always did talk too much, and it wasn't long before I was impatient when interrupted by the bride or groom, the preacher or any of the guests.

Soon after the breakfast was over the stage came along, and Lige and his bride left for Chillicothe. I swung on behind, and rode uptown.

When my mother heard about my attending the wedding she cried, but she didn't whip me; she never whipped her children, but my father whipped hard. But fortunately he never heard of it, though every one else did. The story of my attending the wedding uninvited, in my bare feet, got round—stories on me

always get round somehow—and I never heard the last of it.

I went back to the town forty years later, and though I had been away a good many years Jim Hamilton threw up the story to me. Jim Hamilton was the man who had always predicted that I would be hanged.

I recalled that prediction to him, but he didn't mind it; indeed he replied quite coolly: "Well, you're not dead yet."

The best women have a streak of stubbornness. I know a gentle woman who has a daughter as gentle as herself. I greatly admire both of them, as they are the sort of women I believe others should accept as models. But John Mason, husband of the one and father of the other, lately told a story about them which amused me.

Every morning this family has fried eggs for breakfast; they prefer eggs cooked in that way rather than soft boiled or scrambled. The gentle mother believes fried eggs should be salted as soon as broken into the pan, while the gentle daughter believes they should be salted when ready for the table.

Mary, the gentle daughter, always fried the eggs, and the husband and father says that every morning for years his gentle wife said to his gentle daughter as soon as she broke the eggs into the frying pan: "Mary, did you salt the eggs?"

And Mary, being truthful, replied that she had not; and being obedient, proceeded to salt them according to her mother's notions rather than according to her own; at the same time getting that sullen look in her eyes which should never disfigure the face of a gentle woman.

The husband and father says he and his wife lately spent the night at the home of his daughter, now married, and at breakfast the daughter salted the eggs when she brought them to the table.

"And," he added, "they were just as good; though I could see my wife was aching to say something."

When there is anything going on in the surrounding country some of the town men drive out. The habit not only brings trade but extends our acquaintance.

Last week I drove out to attend the golden wedding of Uncle Jimmy Haskins. There were a good many children and grandchildren present, and all the neighbours; and after dinner Uncle Jimmy and his wife told reminiscences.

Mrs. Haskins remembered little but hard work. It seemed wonderful to me that a woman should work as hard as she did, even in the early days, and she made out quite a case, I thought, against her daughters, her daughters-in-law and the other women present.

I suppose Uncle Jimmy worked hard too, but he didn't say much about it. I was struck with the fact that the most remarkable event he could recall in his history was that he once killed a squirrel with a rifle after several other men had fired at it repeatedly. Here was a man seventy-seven years old, yet he had no other adventure worth recalling. Uncle Jimmy has five sons, who are prosperous farmers, and four daughters, who married good men. He is a man of

fair intelligence and ability, yet he has nothing to boast of except one lucky shot at a squirrel!

Uncle Jimmy went to work early. I heard him recall that he did farm work when he was six years old and that his father used to complain bitterly that the boy had been a burden until he passed into his seventh year. For seventy-one years therefore he had been going to bed only to be called in the morning to go to work, and nothing remarkable has happened to him except shooting a squirrel.

I have heard it said that every man's life would make a book if candidly written, but probably this is a mistake; certainly Uncle Jimmy's memoirs would be rejected by a publisher. In his day there were bears and deer and buffaloes, but he never killed one. He was once young and rode about looking for adventure, but never found any.

In the early days there were bold and wicked men, but they never disturbed him. For seventy-odd years he has locked his doors and fastened his windows at night, but has never been robbed. In seventy-seven years he has never had an illness worth recalling. The wind and lightning have threatened more than three-quarters of a century without hitting him.

I have been thinking of Uncle Jimmy's humdrum life and am compelled to confess that so far mine has been much like it.

GUS SANDERSON

When the railroad decided to extend, Gus Sanderson had a tip that a town was to be built in a cornfield twenty miles west to be called Prairie View. So he went to an ignorant Indian, who didn't know anything, and offered him thirteen thousand dollars for forty acres adjoining the proposed town site. The Indian accepted the offer, and everybody abused Sanderson for cheating a poor Indian. They said Sanderson having had the benefit of public schools and civilization and newspapers was an intelligent and learned man and that therefore he should not have robbed an ignorant Indian who had never had any advantages.

For two or three years Sanderson was held up to public scorn because of the transaction and there was a good deal of talk about his tainted money. One pastor refused to accept a donation from Gus because of the transaction with the Indian, and the pastor was generally praised because he was high-minded.

But the boom at Prairie View did not develop as was expected. The land is not now worth half what Sanderson paid for it. There is now indeed some sympathy for Sanderson and people say it was a shame for a smart Indian to rob a fool white man.

TOM HARRISON

Old Tom Harrison, who was very old, very poor and lately rather weak-minded, died last night. There was not a dissenting voice. We all said, "He's better off."

Usually in case of a death many say, "It's too bad." But the decision was unanimous in old Tom's case.

JUDGE TERRY

When Roscoe Terry, the lawyer, came to town we somehow knew he expected to be called judge, and so he has been known ever since. He is quite old now, somewhat deaf and being cared for by his children. Having long been a widower he has no wife to talk to and is alone a great deal, so his children pay the hired girl an extra dollar a week to listen to him politely while he settles things and criticizes what he reads. The hired girl is a Swede and doesn't understand half he is saying. A man doesn't care to quit expressing his opinions because he is old. The Swede girl is wise enough not to reply to his arguments, so he soon settles the questions he discusses and goes off to read and find something new to be indignant about.

We have in this town a lodge known as the Central Protective Association. It originated among the farmers to discourage horse stealing, but nearly all the town men joined as a means of getting country trade. The meetings of the association are mainly devoted to oyster suppers in winter and ice-cream socials in summer and the initiation. The members do nearly everything to those who join.

The work is supposed to be secret, but a smart country boy can describe the ceremonies of nearly every lodge in town. So the Wittwer boys, Doc and Orrie, knew what they were about when they concluded to become members.

Word went round quietly that the Wittwers were candidates on a certain night and they were given the full works with a few extra touches, as the Wittwers were known to be waggish themselves.

When the exercises were finally over the Wittwer boys were called on for speeches in order to have more fun with them. Doc Wittwer was called on first and said he liked the order well enough, but that it seemed to him the Wittwers had been given the worst of it; that his name was second on the list of candidates, but he was compelled to wait in the anteroom

three hours before being called out. He also expressed the opinion that the Wittwers were about as good as some others; that their notes were as highly regarded at the bank and their trade as much sought after at the stores.

Orrie Wittwer also talked—without being called on. He shared his brother's resentment. Orrie Wittwer was rather more reasonable than his brother and was finally pacified by the president, but Doc Wittwer continued to talk about what he called a raw deal. The president said he was certain no disrespect had been purposely shown the Wittwers, but Doc said disrespect had been shown them—and quite gratuitously, he thought. When the president said they were now all brothers Doc replied that the president should have thought of that when the Wittwers were being mauled by nearly a hundred others. Doc frankly confessed he was ill-natured and not likely to get rid of it soon.

Harvey Stone, an old member, finally interrupted and said with some heat that as the new member did not seem to be satisfied why didn't he get out. Whereupon Doc Wittwer replied that possibly there was a gentleman present who could or would attempt to put him out.

The president wildly waved his arms and demanded order; he called on all present to remember their pledges, for it seemed there was not only a gentleman

present who thought he could put Doc Wittwer out but who was actually advancing for that purpose.

The scene of merriment was thus suddenly changed to one of terror, for Doc Wittwer put his right hand behind him and warned Harvey Stone to keep his distance. But as Mr. Stone did not keep his distance Doc Wittwer pulled a long pistol and fired. Harvey Stone fell, the lights went out and the shooting became general.

Clarence Bradford thought he was the first brother to get out of the hall, but when he reached the street found that Henry Ward had preceded him, found the city marshal and was coming back with that official. Harvey Stone, whose business it was to fire blank cartridges at the floor when the lights went out, says he hit Tom Hart, who seemed to be crawling, with a paper wad, and then when he fired in the air to avoid hitting any other brother hit Sam Stevens, who seemed to be flying.

It was all a joke. The Wittwer boys were getting even, but the old members did not know it and threaten to file charges against the new members.

AUNT MAHALA

I heard today of the death of one of the most remarkable women I ever knew—my Aunt Mahala. This worthy woman spent her life in visiting round among her relatives. And she was unusual in this: Before they were ready for her to go at one house there was clamouring for her at all the others. The great event at our house when I was a boy was the arrival of Aunt Mahala, and though she did not have much herself she always managed to bring something for every member of the family. The older ones loved her as well as the children and no one in all of our vast connection ever tired of her. She always had dates a year ahead.

Aunt Mahala had no rights that she cared to assert and for that reason she enjoyed more rights than any woman I ever knew. She was willing to sleep on a pallet on the floor, but always had the best bed in the house. There was not a man in all our connection that would not take his team from the plough during the busy season and go after her.

Aunt Mahala was a great lover of children. I remember that when she went to visit at Uncle John's or Aunt Lib's I heard soon after that there was a new baby at their house. Aunt Mahala was so fond of

children that she always wanted to be the first to welcome them. If any of the grown people in the family met with an accident or had a severe sickness they were never satisfied that everything possible was being done until Aunt Mahala arrived and cried softly for a moment beside their bed. Then she would remove her things and in half an hour the patient would be much better. Whatever the trouble was, Aunt Mahala knew what to do. I used to think that whatever respect the neighbours had for our family was on account of Aunt Mahala. The neighbours wanted her to visit them, but we never could spare her.

The letter informing me of her death said she went to bed in her usual health one night and was found dead in the morning. That was always Aunt Mahala's way—she never wanted to make trouble.

MARIE TAYLOR

We began hearing of Marie Taylor's art when she was seven years old. At that early day she could play a piano pretty well and many of us were compelled to listen when we didn't care for it. Not that she wasn't good—for a child—and from that day to this we have heard about the place she is entitled to fill in the musical world.

Old Henry Taylor, her father, never took so much interest in Marie's art as did his wife, who was almost crazy on the subject. But old Henry somehow managed to raise money to pay for her lessons. When her piano teacher gave a recital we were all expected to buy tickets, because our town had never before had a prospect of occupying a position in the public eye, and we knew Marie would play at least twice herself and once with the teacher.

When Marie was seventeen we began hearing that she really should have better instruction, as she had outgrown all the teachers at home; and then came the occasion when tickets sold at a dollar each. Not many were present for one cause or another, but Marie got off for the city. When she came back we were all expected to be interested in the improvement she had made under Bagalowski, who came home with

her and played at her concert; and really we couldn't see that he was very much better than Marie. Indeed, he was reported as saying that she should go abroad, which she soon did, her mother going with her.

The going-abroad concert was not much of a success either. When the Taylors were leaving the hall they were all ill-natured and old Henry spoke sharply to his wife as Maria, though we had all been given to understand that Marie had been named for her mother.

There was considerable sympathy for old Henry Taylor, because of the manner in which he slaved and saved to pay the expense of the trip abroad. Doc Filson even went so far as to say that though most of the girls round town took lessons they knew when to stop.

At the end of a year old Henry Taylor moved away. We were at liberty to believe he was going to Paris, where his daughter was succeeding with her art, but he never said where he was going.

We found out a few years later. Marsh Edson, who made a trip to Oklahoma to look at land, ran across them in a little town there, and Marie was giving lessons, charging fifty cents an hour because she had studied abroad.

A man named James T. Oliver, who advertises in the papers that he will raise money for various unnecessary public enterprises for a per cent of the collections, lately appeared here with the avowed purpose of raising ten thousand dollars in seven days.

Oliver called on Bill Hall and found him busy, but Oliver impudently demanded that Mr. Hall listen to him. Hall was angered by this unusual demand, but finally suspended business as the nervy agent required. Hall listened patiently while Oliver made his talk and then asked: "May I now say a word?"

Oliver grudgingly consented and Hall said: "In the first place, I will give you nothing. In the second, I want to tell you that I regard you as the nerviest adventurer I have encountered in many years. You depend upon your impudence, of which you have a disgusting supply, to carry you through; and I wish to add that if you are not out of this office in two seconds I will give you a whipping you will long remember. I have been annoyed by adventurers of your type until I am fighting mad."

"Remember, sir," Oliver said, "that there are ladies present."

Oliver has two women helpers and these were with him.

"My remarks refer to them as well as to you," Bill said. "I am glad they are present to hear what I have to say."

Oliver replied with extracts from his biggest talk and Bill hit him. Oliver struck back and Bill wiped the floor with him in spite of the screams of the lady assistants. Then Oliver was led to the door and thrown into the street. He spent five days in a hospital and says he will sue Bill for fifty thousand dollars damages.

The local paper in speaking of the affair said: "Without discussing here the right or wrong of Mr. Hall's action, it is only fair to say that it seems to be very popular. Mr. Hall is receiving hundreds of letters of congratulation."

I don't mind confessing I sent one of those letters.

JOHN DAVIS

There is no better young man in town than John Davis. He is polite, reliable and reads good books. Indeed when he went on his wedding journey he took a Bible with him.

It was a praiseworthy thing to do, but many people laughed over the incident. Indeed, some of the young people say they heard the bride herself laugh about it.

HON. MARTIN HOLBROOK

Ten years ago Martin Holbrook was a member of Congress and has been proud of it ever since. But people do not remember his efforts in their behalf. About all they say of his experience at the Capitol is:

"You wouldn't think that man had been in Congress, would you?"

ANS WHITCOMB

When I was a boy thirteen or fourteen years old Ans Whitcomb, the tombstone man, asked me to drive out in the country to see if Squire Newcomb would take a monument they had been dickering over. It seems the old squire wanted the monument—if at all—by the twenty-eighth, the anniversary of his wife's death, and as Ans talked to me on the fourteenth he had to know about it, as several days would be required to cut the dove and the lettering. So he said he would give me a dollar and let me take his horse and buggy if I would drive out and see.

Squire Newcomb didn't say in so many words that he wouldn't take the tombstone; he said he would see Ans about it, or something else that made me believe in connection with my friendship for Ans and my optimism that it would be all right.

I didn't like to have Ans waste his dollar or return from a fruitless errand, so my reply caused Ans to go ahead and finish the tombstone. I felt a little queer when I saw him working on it, but I was always too optimistic and really believed the old squire would take the tombstone after the design they had talked over was complete.

It turned out that Squire Newcomb had actually bought a tombstone of another agent before I went out there, and I felt so mean about it that it was a relief when Ans moved away. I was never able to see him without feeling guilty, though I was really only optimistic when I deceived him.

The experience taught me a lesson. I cross my t's and dot my i's now in conversation as well as in letters. I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic.

MART TOWNE

I once knew a man named Mart Towne, who was wasting away with illness. Meeting him one day, I suggested a remedy.

"I can't try your suggestion for some time," he replied in a weak voice, "so many others are in ahead of you."

The man died before he got round to my remedy. Here was a man who had had good advice for years, yet he grew thinner steadily and finally died with a great stock of good advice on hand he had been unable to try.

SARAH BROWNELL

Sarah Brownell lately procured a divorce from her husband and they had quite a time making charges against each other, indicating a rough-house continuing several years.

Yesterday I was on the streets and by accident fell in behind Mrs. Brownell and Milt Ward, a well-known old bachelor.

Mrs. Brownell was displaying all the womanly arts of fascination, and the exhibit was interesting to me, when I remembered some of the testimony in the divorce proceedings. Mr. Brownell swore among other things that his wife hit him with a skillet.

But how gentle she was to Milt Ward! How prettily she looked into his eyes! There was art in her smile—in every action.

And Milt Ward was as gallant and interested a gentleman as I have ever seen. Unless he wants to break his resolution not to marry so long as his mother lives he'd better quit going with that woman.

I suggest that the old saying be changed to "Everything is fair in war," and leave love out of it. Cap Wilson, the warrior, says he killed a man at Gettysburg and maybe several others he doesn't know about. He is not only forgiven but there is talk of making him county treasurer.

But it is different with Tom Marsh, the lover. Every one is picking on him so persistently because of a recent love affair that instead of talk of electing him to office there is talk of putting him where the dogs won't bite him.

JIM SEARLES

When James Hadley Searles first came to town he stopped at the Pierce House and paid the regular rate, which was two dollars a day. We heard he was a college graduate and a lawyer and represented Eastern capital, but in two weeks he moved to Mrs. Hampton's boarding house and paid six dollars a week.

At first Mr. Searles wore his best clothes all the time, but at the end of a couple of months he put on an old suit and opened a law office of one room in Scully's Block. After that a good many called him Jim and everybody knew he didn't represent much Eastern capital.

A young fellow named Henry Longfellow Marsh came to visit Jim the following spring and it was said round the boarding house that they talked a good deal of their old college days and of the pranks they used to play. They also sang several songs nobody else knew.

"I suppose I ought to have a college education," Bill Hillman, one of the other boarders, said privately, "but a good many get along without it."

That comforted others, for Jim made such a specialty of his college education that learning was rather

more unpopular than it would otherwise have been. He brought the first news of Keats and Shelley to our town. Some of us had heard of Dante and tried to read the Divine Comedy, but in wondering why it was called a comedy gave it up.

Jim put in his letter at the Presbyterian church; he said that was the thing to do in getting acquainted in a little town, but a good many knew he was not strict. Indeed, he hinted that if he cared to he could controvert a good deal the minister said, and one time, when some of the young men sent to the city for a bottle of whisky, he gave them to understand it was no new thing to him. But otherwise he was guilty of no particular devilment and was well behaved, though his talk always had the sarcastic tinge common with highly educated men who do not succeed very well.

When rather old Jim married Amanda Wheeler, the school-teacher, who also had a college education, and they had three children, Matthew, Mark and John, who also felt their superiority. They kept two cows and, having a surplus of milk, the children peddled it round the neighbourhood.

Bart Wherry, the other lawyer, who continued to have most of the law business, never liked Jim very well and once, when he found that his wife was taking milk of Searles, said: "If he ever makes me mad I'll quit taking milk of him and starve him to death."

SANDY McPHERSON

Sandy McPherson, the barber, says he charges five dollars for shaving a dead man because he is compelled to throw away the razor he uses. But how do we know he throws the razor away?

JOE BUSH

Joe Bush, who travels for a city house but lives in this town, had occasion to make a trip of eighteen miles on a Sunday night. For the purpose he hired an automobile and a driver.

Along the road the headlight of the machine displayed a number of Scriptural texts painted in large letters on a farmer's barn. The driver was not certain about the road at this point and Joe went in to inquire.

He found the farmer and members of his family engaged in a religious service and Joe was invited to take part, which he did. When they engaged in prayer, which the farmer led, he bluntly criticized Joe for travelling Sunday night. Then there was singing, and at the end of the second hymn the farmer invited Joe to lead in prayer.

Joe was brought up in a Christian family and, though he had never before led in prayer, he was a little mad because of the manner in which the farmer had talked about him and he accepted the invitation.

Joe approached the throne of grace so devoutly that the farmer frequently cried "Amen" to express approval. But as Joe warmed up he began criticizing

the farmer for lack of charity. He asked the Lord to soften the hearts of hypocrites and others who thought too much of themselves and finally closed by expressing the hope that at the last great day the most unregenerate and impudent might be saved.

The prayer over, they sang another hymn, and then the farmer wanted to pray again to answer Joe, but Joe said he was in a hurry to make a train in the next town and departed after shaking hands all round.

CLEVE HUNT

Cleve Hunt, a Baptist, is going with Mary Harris, a Presbyterian. They are engaged, but delay marriage because of their differences in Christian doctrine. One Sunday Cleve goes to the Presbyterian church with Mary and the mean way in which he looks about has attracted attention: a good many folks are now going to the Presbyterian church simply to be amused at the way Cleve registers disgust throughout the services.

The next Sunday the crowd goes to the Baptist church, where Mary Harris registers disgust and contempt for everything Baptist. Church attendance in the neighbourhood has greatly increased because of the row.

MICHAEL RAFFERTY

Michael Rafferty, who lives in Chicago, is visiting his sister, Mrs. Maggie Kelley. Mr. Rafferty finds it dull here, as there are only women in the house where he is visiting. They say Mr. Rafferty's yawn, as he sits on the porch of his sister's home in the evening, is something artistic as an expression of being bored.

Joe Wells' sister Susan, who married well and is living in Chicago, is visiting her brother. The other day one of Ben Hewling's little girls was playing with the Wells children and saw Susan smoking a cigarette. The child was greatly shocked and, hurrying home, said to her mother: "When I go down town I intend to tell a policeman."

TOM HARPER

I lately met Tom Harper. He has been married only three months, but I have never seen a more wretched-looking man.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

He made no reply except to reach in his pocket and hand me a paper. It was a dentist's bill for seventy-three dollars for fixing his wife's teeth. There is a good deal of talk about the incident. Mrs. Harper's parents knew her teeth needed a good overhauling when she was at home. Why did they put it off? Some of the men say Mrs. Harper's father should pay the bill.

The day Asberry Morton was elected to Congress from the Fifth District there was a good deal of quiet satisfaction all over town; not that we expected he would be able to do much for us, but his election was a tribute to an excellent man we all highly esteemed.

Asberry was not a genius, but a good steady citizen and neighbour who for a quarter of a century had enjoyed an excellent reputation. People liked his wife and children, too, for Asberry had made a success as a husband and father as well as a merchant and citizen.

His nomination for Congress was a compromise, but his election was expected, as he stood well all over the district and his party had a commanding majority.

The evening after the election Tom Harris gave a dinner in Asberry's honour. Only a few of his more particular friends were invited. After dinner the husbands smoked in the dining room, while the wives retired to the front room, where they talked about whatever interested them.

Asberry expressed much satisfaction because of the good friends he had, and of the compliment paid him late in life. Being the guest of the evening he was permitted to do most of the talking. This op-

portunity caused him to tell a reminiscence of his early life.

There were four listeners to the story, and Asberry began it by saying: "Four of the five best friends I have in the world are present tonight, the fifth being my wife, and I feel like making the confession to you I made to her long ago. When I came to this town and opened the Bargain Store the other merchants said I was a tramp, and should be taxed so heavily that I would move on without opening my goods; but I have been here twenty-five years, and shall probably remain as long as I live. I have a lot in the cemetery for six, and it happens that I have a wife and four children. My sons and daughters do not seem to be wanderers, and all of us will probably be buried here.

"Before I came to this town I lived in a place of about the same size, and was a storekeeper there, as I have always been here. I inherited the business from my father, as I did the house in which I was born. I was entirely alone in the world, my parents having died in middle life. I knew every one in the town, and as there had been no more against my family than there is against the average of respectable people I was accepted everywhere and lived the usual life of a fairly worthy and prosperous young man.

"Up to the time I was twenty-nine I had four love affairs—that is, I was engaged to that number of

girls, but in one way and another I separated from all of them without more harm than comes to any good girl who is engaged to be married to a man if the engagement is broken.

"After my fourth love affair I supposed I would remain a bachelor. The people did not think of me as a marrying man, and so when I began calling on Mary Ward at intervals it was an affair of the kind known as platonic, a term I have never quite understood. She knew I was rather old and rather fickle, and apparently did not expect any special attention, but after going with her two years we naturally and unconsciously drifted into a situation where we both accepted marriage as a probability of the future.

"But in spite of my genuine affection for Mary Ward I fell in love again.

"It is an uncomfortable confession to make; but in spite of the fact that I loved Mary Ward sincerely I fell in love with Mary Howard, a little country girl whose people traded with me. And I acquired the habit of going to see her, without any intention of being unfair to any one. And finally, in the vague way common in love affairs, she came to understand that I intended to marry her, as I would have done cheerfully had it not been for Mary Ward.

"Since I am old and this affair is all in the past I will confess I loved both of them; both were necessary to my happiness. I could not give up either.

"It happened that the two girls did not know each other, as one lived in town and the other in the country. So I strolled over to see Mary Ward every Tuesday night, and drove into the country every Sunday to see Mary Howard, usually taking supper with the family and remaining until bedtime, when I would sneak home. I resolved to break with one or the other, but it disturbed me to think of either as the wife of another man. Besides, neither gave me the slightest excuse, not knowing I wanted it; so I gradually got in a little deeper with both. As a rule country girls are more jealous than town girls, but Mary Howard was as gentle as I could wish, as was Mary Ward. For a wonder, neither ever heard of my perfidy, and both treated me with the consideration a good woman lavishes on the man she expects to marry. I was always rather reserved about my love affairs, and the people did not make me much trouble. But I appreciated my own meanness, and worried about it.

"From going to see Mary Ward once a week she somehow arranged that I should call twice a week. I knew there was bound to come a clash, but finally went to see Mary Ward every Friday night, as well as every Tuesday. And in the same indolent way I found myself at Mary Howard's home in the country every Wednesday night in addition to every Sunday night. And I remained late at both places; to confess I was in need of sleep was to confess all, or con-

fess lack of affection, and I felt no lack of that for either.

"Finally neither could understand why I did not wish to see her at least every other evening, so my health as well as my conscience became involved. Lack of sleep caused me to become nervous and I frequently pretended illness as an excuse to remain at home and secure the sleep I so much needed. I actually did not look well, and both Mary Ward and Mary Howard were greatly concerned about me. The result of it all was I was seized with an illness, which worried them greatly, as it did me; for I knew the sword hanging over my head was becoming heavier, and that the thread suspending it was greatly worn.

"During my illness I received pretty notes from both of them, and both expressed a wish to see me, to do something for me. But I hurriedly replied by trusted messengers that I had every attention, which was the case. The elderly widow who kept house for me had been in our family since I was a child, and was very capable and kind. But I feared that Mary Ward and Mary Howard might come to see me, and meet.

"This was what actually happened; this is why I am in this town, a runaway, though there is actually nothing against me except that I had two love affairs at the same time. It is fortunate the opposition papers did not hear about it during the recent cam-

paign; I spent many a sleepless night because of the fear that they might.

"One evening when my illness had been relieved by rest and sleep, and when I was much better, except my guilty conscience, the door of my room quietly opened, and Mary Ward came in. She was all in a tremor, and her devotion would have pleased me except that I feared Mary Howard would do the same thing.

"Mary Ward explained that she was so worried that she could no longer remain away, and that her mother had at last consented to her coming; she felt sure the people would not object since they knew we were to be married. So she took off her hat and said she intended caring for me until I recovered, expressing the hope that her determination would meet with my approval.

"You know some things are going to happen before they happen; I knew Mary Howard was liable to come in, and she did.

"I had said almost nothing to Mary Ward when Mary Howard came in, and Miss Ward explained to the strange woman, with coolness and good breeding, that she was my promised wife, and felt it her duty to care for me in spite of conventions.

"I knew there was only one thing for me to do, and I did that; I went out of my head. And when Mary Ward appealed to me to verify her statement I pre-

tended to be unconscious, and she called the housekeeper.

"Also the doctor. He was a wise old scout, a particular friend of mine, and when he came understood the situation, I think. I think the housekeeper also suspected the truth, and what they did to bring me back to consciousness didn't hurt, nor did they send out a general alarm.

"Though I had my eyes closed and pretended to be out of my head I knew what was going on; I knew that Mary Howard accepted what Mary Ward said as the truth. I knew that she rose, and with as much coolness and good breeding as Mary Ward had shown said I was a family friend; that she had merely called to inquire how I was, at the request of her parents. Then she quietly departed.

"Though I realized that I had terribly hurt and wronged Mary Howard her action was the most agreeable thing that ever happened to me; my election to Congress was a trifle compared to what Mary Howard did for me. The long-expected blow had not fallen; I was free, without humiliation or difficulty.

"I soon rallied as a result of the restoratives given me by my friend the doctor, and Mary Ward's devotion was really beautiful. I appreciated it, too, but could not forget the greater service Mary Howard had done me."

After looking at the floor for a time as if in deep

reflection Asberry continued: "I married one of those girls. Which one do you think I selected?"

We all refused to guess, pretending that we preferred to hear the end of the story; but I had an opinion, and the others confessed to me later that they had, and we were all wrong.

"I very easily persuaded Mary Ward," Asberry continued, "that though I appreciated her interest in me it was best for her to return home, as I was improving; and she did this so quietly that the incident was never known.

"At first I felt that Mary Howard did not greatly care for me. But the more I thought of it the more I appreciated her dignified behaviour and her action in rescuing me without scandal from a very bad situation. I soon recovered from my illness, and went to see Mary Ward, who seemed to have no suspicion whatever of the true situation. She was indeed more agreeable than ever, and I loved her more devotedly than before. I suggested marriage earlier than we had intended, which was agreeable to her.

"I had feared gossip about the affair, but it never developed; I was free. But all the time I was thinking of Mary Howard. How was she taking it? What did her folks think? Apparently they had no ill will, for they came to the store as usual, though Mary herself never came.

"It is getting late, and we should join the ladies,

therefore I will shorten the story. I wrote Mary a note, asking for an interview. She did not reply for a week, but at the end of that time consented to see me. I told her everything as candidly as I have told you. In addition, I said I could not get along without her. She confessed the same thing to me, and I resumed the old situation—going to see Mary Ward one evening, and Mary Howard the next. Finally I could think of but one way out of the difficulty, so I sold out quietly, ran away with one of the girls, and appeared here. What became of the other? I know no more than you do. I have avoided news from my old town."

Asberry stepped into the front room while we were looking at each other in astonishment, and returned with his wife.

"Mary," he said to her, "I have been telling these gentlemen that I love every white hair in your head, and that you have always been a good wife to me."

Mary patted her husband's arm gently, and then said gaily: "Come out and tell the girls that! "

And they went away together, to the front room. We followed, and heard Mary say he was the best man the Lord ever let live.

BEN BRADFORD

Ben Bradford, known to be a little gay, says the first time he kissed a woman other than his wife, he felt as sneaking as he did when he first began buying of Montgomery Ward and Co. But Ben gradually became hardened, and many say he now trades with Sears-Roebuck, too.

PETE ROBIDOUX

In the early days Pete Robidoux operated a general store away out on the frontier, where the railroad ended on the prairie. Late one night a party of rough men brought a horse thief into the store, and told Mr. Robidoux they intended to hang him.

The weather was cold, and after members of the party had dined on cove oysters, crackers, cheese and jerked buffalo meat, some one suggested that they warm up a little. Thereupon whisky was procured, and the entire party began drinking. The prisoner joined in the festivities and seemed to enjoy himself as much as any one. By midnight all the members of the party were drunk and good-natured; but they knew what they were there for, and told the prisoner that they still intended to hang him.

The prisoner tried to argue his captors out of the notion, and they wrangled for an hour with him; they wanted to make him admit that they were right in their determination to hang him, but he was stubborn and contended that though he had taken the horse it really belonged to him, and he could prove it.

But he failed to prove it to the satisfaction of those concerned, and at one o'clock in the morning they all staggered out, carrying a rope, but all very noisy and

good-natured. In ten minutes they came back saying they could not find a telegraph pole suitable for a hanging; they had really found a pole, but no one could climb it to get the rope over the arms.

Some one then suggested that the prisoner be shot, as the night was very cold for a hanging. But no one cared to shoot him in cold blood, and it was then suggested that they all take a shot at him at the same time.

This execution could not be arranged, either, so one genius had a happy thought, and asked the prisoner to shoot himself. The man who had the happy thought said the members of the lynching party were all good citizens with families, and hated to have blood on their hands, which could be avoided if the prisoner would be reasonable.

Whereupon the prisoner said that much as he admired his new friends, and respected the majesty of the law, he did not care to go that far. So they kept on drinking, and arguing with the prisoner that since he was to lose his life anyway he might as well be a good fellow and shoot himself. They said they had fed him, and given him his turn at the jug every time it was passed, which he admitted; but he was stubborn and said he could not see his way clear to oblige them.

By four o'clock in the morning they were all asleep on the floor of the store, on buffalo robes. When

they woke it was eight o'clock in the morning, and the citizens stirring; so an hour later the members of the party rode away, and Mr. Robidoux never heard what became of the horse thief. All Mr. Robidoux knows is that he went away with his captors, and was still arguing that though he took the horse it belonged to him, and he could prove it. Also, that the suggestion that he shoot himself was unreasonable.

BILL HARMON

During the winter days, when there isn't much to do, a favourite gathering place for the men is Bill Harmon's harness shop. It was Bill's habit to make up a stock of harness in advance for the spring trade; so, though busy in winter, he was able to talk while he worked and enjoyed the idlers who made his shop a meeting place.

And Bill was a good talker and had ideas. He had been discussing for years the questions of the day, and picking up a fact here and another there had accumulated a fund of information that was really unusual. Of all the talkers who gathered at his shop not one was so good as Bill and they all quit when he began; a rare tribute, for men usually interrupt to express their own ideas.

When the bond election came on Cap. Stabler went privately to Bill and suggested that he deliver a public speech against the bonds. The railroad had imported a lot of paid orators, and they were having an influence. Cap. Stabler and Bill and most of the regulars at the harness shop were opposed to the bonds; and Cap. Stabler urged that Bill make a speech.

"I've heard you talk for years," Cap. said to him,

"and I know you can sway the people. None of these paid hirelings of the railroad can equal you."

Bill said he couldn't talk in public; that he had thought of it, and cold chills ran all over him.

"Don't expect it of me, Cap.," Bill said; "I'd like to make a speech and have an influence in the community; I don't deny I've often thought of it, but you'll have to excuse me. If I should attempt to stand before an audience I should die of fright."

But Cap. Stabler kept at Bill, and one day he promised. So Cap. got out bills announcing a citizens' meeting at City Hall, when the important issues of the day would be discussed by able speakers.

Nate Somers, who played solo alto in the band, was opposed to the bonds, too, and one of the regulars at Bill's shop; and being let into the secret said he believed he could get the band boys to turn out for nothing.

The night for the speaking came on, and a tremendous crowd was present; Nate Somers had coaxed the band boys to turn out for nothing, and they played four of the town favourites outside the hall and two more inside.

Cap. Stabler and Bill went in early, and Bill sat down in the front row, while Cap. took a seat on the platform; he thought a good deal of his own ability as a talker, so he often made himself chairman of a meeting without any action on the part of those present.

After there had been a round or two of stamping and clapping, indicating that the people were impatient to hear the able speakers promised, Cap. Stabler stepped to the front of the platform and said a crisis in the town's affairs had arisen, that certain corrupt influences were showing themselves and that an able speaker was present to warn the people.

"I refer, fellow citizens," Cap. concluded, "to a citizen you all know and respect; a gentleman of intelligence and ability to express his thoughts; a man whose words are respected by those who know him. I take pleasure in introducing Colonel William Peyton Harmon."

The people all knew Bill Harmon, but they did not know Colonel William Peyton Harmon; so they cheered and applauded and were anxious to hear the new man; they had long ago become tired of the regular town orators and wanted to hear arguments they had never heard before.

Cap. Stabler noticed that Bill was sitting on the front seat with his head bowed on his breast, but that he made no move to take the platform. So Cap. went down and spoke to him; touched him.

He was dead; scared to death.

DOC ROBINSON

I have noticed that the people take as much delight in praising a worthless man as they take in abusing a respectable one. People say Doc Robinson, the town drunkard, was once a noted surgeon in London; that he was engaged to a beautiful young lady of New York, but gave her up because his parents objected, and thus went to the dogs; that he has the best education of any man in town; that he is a man of fine intellect; that he is a younger son of a titled family in England, and that when his brother dies he will become a duke.

I looked Doc up and discovered that the only notable thing that ever happened in his life was that he attended a veterinary college in Canada, where he was born on a farm and where he lived until he came to this country to make horse liniment, the basis of which, alcohol, he sweetened and drank, and thus became a drunkard.

JIM SHIELDS

Doc Shields attended the recent Firemen's Ball without his wife; and, what is more, his wife was at home sick; so sick, indeed, that the neighbour women were compelled to go in and sit with her while her husband was dancing. The women at the ball knew Mrs. Shields had been very poorly for several months and did not welcome Doc; but Maria Dunlap, who is old and plain, accepted an invitation to dance with him.

While they were engaged in a waltz Maria thought it only polite to inquire about Mrs. Shields, so she asked: "Mr. Shields, how is your wife?"

Doc is not a real doctor; they call him that because he once bought a drug store, and failed; and as he whirled in the dance Doc replied to Maria's question about the condition of his wife: "She is a very sick woman. I don't believe she'll live till morning."

BEN THOMPSON

When Ben Thompson married Alice Hurley he was forty-one years old, and Alice twenty-nine. The disparity in their ages caused people to make a complete investigation, and those were the official figures: 41 and 29. But within a year people began exaggerating Ben's age upward, and Alice's downward, and this they have kept up until I heard this week that Ben was sixty when he married, and Alice nineteen.

JERRY SHACKELFORD

Many years ago a man named Jerry Shackelford lived in a lonely house in the woods south of town. His wife asked him one afternoon to get an armful of oven wood; she was baking and wanted wood to heat the oven of the cookstove to the best advantage. But he delayed going, and his wife finally spoke to him sharply, as her bread was ready to bake. Jerry was very sensitive, and the reproof made him so mad that he went out of the house, and for fifteen years nothing was heard of him.

His wife continued living in the old house, and the neighbours told the story of the runaway in whispers. They noted that through every night a light burned in the window, as though inviting Jerry to return. Mrs. Shackelford loved her husband as much as wives usually do; the trouble was that Jerry was more sensitive than most husbands.

One cold blustery night as Mrs. Shackelford sat with her feet in the oven of the cookstove, to keep them warm, the front door opened and Jerry walked in carrying an armful of oven wood, which he deposited in the wood box behind the cookstove.

Mrs. Shackelford was glad to see her husband and welcomed the chance to make up, but she thought she

should in some way indicate that his long absence had been unusual and improper, so she said: "Well, I will say you have been a long time about it!"

That made Jerry mad again, he was so sensitive; so he went out of the house again and has never been heard of since.

When the rebellion broke out Cap. Hansen promptly enlisted and came back a captain.

Cap. Hansen was such a hard worker that he had no time to acquire an education, so about all he knew of the classics was the saying, "Beyond the Alps lies Italy," though after the war he was occasionally heard to say, "All quiet along the Potomac," and probably knew in a general way from hearing it talked about so much that Byron awoke one morning and found himself famous.

Cap. Hansen somehow found time to marry and had a large family of children, all of whom he sent to college as they became old enough, but continued to work very hard himself. When he felt tired or discouraged he quoted his favourite saying, "Beyond the Alps lies Italy," and that seemed to make him feel better.

There never was a better man than Cap. Hansen, but people finally began laughing at him, he worked so hard. They said he was an old fool, and criticized him because he did not get something out of his money. After passing seventy he began to get out of shape; his hands were crooked from toil and there

was a stoop in his shoulders. It was pitiful to see him hurrying about, feeble and old.

Cap. Hansen finally crossed the Alps and reached Italy and the age of seventy-nine. There was a contest over his will, in which one faction in the family contended that he had been crazy twelve years; the fact also came out that he had worked so hard to make money that he had neglected what he had, and there wasn't a great deal to quarrel over.

HENRY WULFBURGER

What citizen of this town is most highly spoken of? Henry Wulfburger, the iceman, who is so polite and capable that no one can get his customers away from him. He isn't very good looking and not a fastidious dresser; but he delivers ice promptly and puts things back in the refrigerator as he found them.

Henry Wulfburger owns one of the best homes in town, and they say he receives a salary so large that nothing is said about it before the other employés of the ice plant. Who do you suppose will be manager of the ice plant and the big iceman of the town in a few years? Everybody knows it will be Henry Wulfburger.

Henry manages to do some good as he goes along. Nate Salsbury is his assistant on the ice wagon. Nate comes of very shiftless native stock, but Henry Wulfburger is making a man of him. If the people will keep out of it Nate will be saved; there is some grumbling because Nate gets only six dollars a week and works long hours; but the young man is learning more than the ice business. He is learning industry, politeness, honesty and efficiency from the example of Henry Wulfburger. Nate will get more wages in plenty of time; the other iceman will attend to that in case his present employer neglects it.

GEORGE PENDLETON

George Pendleton came to town twelve years ago and opened a grocery store. He has always been a selfish man, and the other storekeepers at first laughed at him; but he turned out to be capable and they soon began abusing him. He was a tremendous worker, and instead of joining the local trust and making just a living he went after business and made money. Many of the storekeepers were becoming careless. George Pendleton caused them to straighten up. There was a gentlemen's agreement among the merchants, and their prices were too high. George Pendleton reduced prices and brought trade to town from a larger area. We had stores about which people grumbled; now we point to them with pride.

All this good was accomplished by a selfish man who had no other ambition than to make money. He gave liberally to every worthy object—really as an advertisement for his business and to make friends; I have heard him grumble at some of the hold-ups—but his main object was to make money. He built a business house, and a good one; his rivals followed his lead. He built a residence; his rivals followed him again. He felt the need of better facilities for doing business, and got them, incidentally benefiting

the town. He was a temperate man, and some of his rivals who had been drinking too much reformed. He was a polite man, and his rivals, who were a little brusque, recovered.

I know of no man who has actually done more for the town than George Pendleton.

When I went downtown in the morning I heard Colonel Andy Miller was dead, and everywhere during the day his death was discussed. Most of the men agreed he was the best citizen we had; I have heard them say the same thing of other friends who have died within the year, and there was a good deal of enthusiasm for a monument over his grave, to be built by public subscription.

In the evening I went to Colonel Miller's house. Mrs. Potter was there, and I was glad to hear that I was not expected to see Mrs. Miller, who was prostrated with grief.

Three or four other men came in, and we discussed the colonel's life. All of us remembered some incident that seemed appropriate, which we told in low voices. In the room adjoining the one in which we sat was the body, packed in ice. The dripping of the water was very disagreeable.

After we had discussed the colonel I noticed that there was a disposition to discuss the mystery of death. Every one said something, and we all expressed the sentiment in about the same way; there did not seem to be anything new to say on the subject. Most of the callers said they would willingly stay all night if necessary, but added that they would rather not if other arrangements could be made, and gave

various excuses. It turned out that Mrs. Potter intended staying; it was unnecessary for any of us to remain.

The colonel and Mrs. Potter were not friends during his life, but she seemed to have charge of the remains. I was told that she arrived at the house a few minutes before Colonel Andy's death. Mrs. Potter is usually present when there is a death in the town, and takes charge of the funeral. The undertaker goes to her, and she arranges about the pall bearers. When she is not in the room where the body lies she is upstairs with members of the family, where few are admitted. If anything is wanted Mrs. Potter gets it, and if a question is to be decided she decides it; first consulting with the family, I suppose.

It was an unworthy thought but it occurred to me that Mrs. Potter enjoyed being there and taking charge of everything. She is of little importance at any other time, and disappears from public view after a funeral, but we all hear of her again as soon as there is another death. She rarely visits any home until it is generally agreed that a sickness will prove fatal, and her coming nearly always sets the members of the family to crying; they know it will not be long before death enters the house. Mrs. Potter does not like me, but I feel sure that when it is agreed I cannot live many hours longer the front door will open quietly and Mrs. Potter will come in.

In a small town most people attend funerals as a mark of respect, and I nearly always meet Mrs. Potter; she doesn't seem to like people until after they are dead. She was married before she came here, but no one knows what became of her husband. Everybody would like to know whether she left him or whether he left her or if he is dead, but we are afraid to ask.

At funerals Mrs. Potter directs who shall enter the first carriage, who the second, who the third, and so on. After all is arranged to her satisfaction she enters a carriage herself, and is the first to arrive at the grave; she must be there to arrange things. She knows what must be done with the floral emblems; some are taken back to the house and others are left at the grave. She remains to see the grave filled up, all the others driving away as soon as the coffin is lowered and the services are over.

Colonel Andy Miller was a prominent man, aggressive and successful, but there was always something about his family life that didn't suit the women. Though it was understood that the colonel and his wife didn't get along, no one knew much about the particulars. He had a mean way of talking about marriage that gave notice that he wasn't very well satisfied with his own, and was a cynic about women—another mark of a dissatisfied husband. When the colonel and his wife were with others he had a sharp

way of saying things directed at her in a distant way; and she seemed timid, as though fearing he might begin a tirade against her in public. People who passed the Miller home late at night told of hearing violent quarrels. Their two daughters were married and living in a distant state, and very much to the surprise of every one it was announced that they would not be able to attend their father's funeral, owing to illness.

Mrs. Miller had a few friends, women who were not very popular themselves, and who seemed glad of a chance to get into the big Miller home, with its lavish furniture. Mrs. Miller had told these women, and somehow the story gained circulation, that she had never had any peace except when the colonel was away in the army. He made money and got along in the world, but seemed to hate his home because his wife was in it. When their daughters were married the Millers made much of the weddings and entertained lavishly, but Mrs. Miller dressed like the furniture in the house, the women said, and commented on it when they returned home. The men accepted the colonel, and he was a man among men, but somehow the women balked at Mrs. Miller, but without saying much about it.

At the funeral Mrs. Miller remained upstairs during the services, with Mrs. Potter. The house was full of women and the yard full of men, but the

absence of any member of the family in the room where the services were held provoked the unspoken comment which frequently goes round on serious occasions. I knew that few women had been upstairs to see Mrs. Miller, and that these were those who had themselves been neglected by society.

When we were ready to start for the cemetery Mrs. Potter, who had charge of everything, waved me into the carriage in which Mrs. Miller rode.

On the way Mrs. Miller looked steadily out of the carriage window without speaking; she was going over her life, it seemed. When we stood beside the grave she didn't look at it or at the coffin or listen to the service; she was looking at the hazy distance through her black veil, trying to decide why Andy and the neighbours didn't like her.

When we rode slowly home Mrs. Miller was still silent and still trying to solve her problems. At frequent intervals she took a long breath in the peculiar way which indicates a cessation of weeping; she seemed hard and bitter, as though thinking of what she might say in her defence if her husband were not dead.

Reaching her house I assisted her to alight, and she staggered a little as we went up the walk. Mrs. Potter opened the front door and met her; they disappeared together, and I returned to my neglected work.

BUD MOFFETT

In the river hills west of town seven out of ten farmers' wives bake biscuits three times a day. Bud Moffett, a young farmer from that section, went to the city to accept a job. But his health soon became poor; in the course of six months many said he was crazy, and there was much worry about him in his old neighbourhood when he returned.

His grandmother after looking at him said: "The trouble with the poor boy is he has been eating light bread."

So they gave him hot biscuits three times a day, and he recovered.

MILT SAYER

People used to say Milt Sayer was naturally mean and that his father was mean before him. The Sayers have lived here ever since the town was started and the very old men say Milt's grandfather never paid any attention to the city ordinances either. City ordinances are intended mainly to regulate strangers, anyway, and Milt Sayer took pleasure in violating them. In fact, that was about the only pleasure he did take, for he never went anywhere except to trade for something that would annoy his neighbours. He once traded for a mule, though he had no use for it except that it brayed all night and made the neighbours mad. The neighbours complained to the city marshal, but he couldn't do anything—at least he never did. Whenever a citizen had a grievance it was easy to induce the city council to pass an ordinance to suppress it, though it never did much good.

Most people kept chickens and let them run at large, which was against a city ordinance, but they mostly kept a mixture which was mainly inoffensive. Milt Sayer made a specialty of Langshans. The roosters of this breed almost shake the earth when they crow and have hoarse voices which are very disagreeable at midnight and just before day. Milt kept twice

as many roosters as he needed in a barnyard cluttered up with old wagons and buggies he never used. In the barn he nearly always had a pup that cried all night, and the water bonds were defeated largely because Milt favoured them.

There wasn't a man in town who hadn't threatened to go to Milt and ask him outright why he was so mean, but no one ever did. So he drifted along like other people, except that his wife and children talked meaner about him. Usually a man's wife and children suffer a good deal before they talk about him to the neighbours, but Milt was so notorious that nearly every time the school children came home they had something new to tell about Milt they had heard from the Sayer children. He choked their mother, they said, and though no marks were ever seen the people liked to repeat these stories. Milt was the favourite town bad man and every time people sat on their porches in the evening they began the gossip by inquiring if he had done anything new to rouse their indignation.

Ed Harris used to say Mrs. Sayer could hold up her end in a row with her husband, though it was the custom to say Milt was very rough with his wife. Ed said that early one morning just at daylight he went to the depot to catch Number 58, the flyer. It didn't stop regularly, but usually took water at a tank a hundred yards above the depot, and Ed ran the risk

of catching it, as he was anxious to get up to the county seat early and return home on 38, the accommodation train. Ed says he heard Milt and his wife quarrelling as he passed their house.

"And believe me," Ed used to say, "the madam wasn't getting the worst of it!"

Because of her trouble with her husband Mrs. Sayer was very bitter about women not being allowed to vote.

It was known Mrs. Sayer had been to see Lawyer Ege, who, the people used to say, took divorce cases free for the pleasure of hearing the particulars first and telling about them.

The particular meanness that caused Milt's wife finally to rebel was never known. He had been guilty of so much that maybe it was an accumulation, but anyway after Mrs. Sayer had told the women for years that she would not stand it another moment she actually went to Lawyer Ege and said she wanted a divorce.

Lawyer Ege acted very mysterious, as though he relied on some particular evidence he knew about that none of the rest of us did, but he never told anything we hadn't heard for years; and when the case actually came up, and a good many went to the county seat to hear the evidence, they didn't learn anything new. Mrs. Sayer took the stand and told the old stories, but Milt wasn't present—he had told his lawyer not

to resist—and didn't seem to care what his wife told on him.

They hadn't much to divide; about everything Milt had was mortgaged to the bank, and all Mrs. Sayer got was enough to take her and the children to some relations she had back East. In accusing Milt of being stingy people used to say he was rich, which made the story better, but he really hadn't anything to speak of. Lawyer Ege made a complete search, but found little. Mrs. Sayer always thought she would get a good deal of alimony, and Lawyer Ege had promised her at least forty dollars a month to live on. But Lawyer Ege couldn't squeeze blood out of a turnip and about all Mrs. Sayer actually got was freedom. She said her relations had always wanted her to leave him and that she only hesitated because of the children. Besides, she feared that if she ever left Milt he would go to the devil.

But Milt didn't miss his family as much as Mrs. Sayer thought he would. He took some of his meals at the restaurant, but mainly lived at home. He turned the mule in on the mortgage, as mules were high that year, and got rid of his hogs, as he said that living alone he could buy bacon cheaper than he could raise it. The money he gave his wife he had raised by increasing the mortgage on his house and, to the surprise of everybody, he paid the interest. As he no longer had children he got rid of pups and one day

shot his dogs because they had eaten his big Langshan roosters. Altogether Milt improved and was better natured. He was even known to attend the band concerts at City Park and once he called on a neighbour in the evening to sit a while. A few of the neighbour women, knowing he must long for home cooking, invited him to an occasional meal and he acted politer than they expected he would.

Two of the older boys came to see their father in course of time and, to the surprise of everybody, remained with him. Mrs. Sayer occasionally wrote to her old neighbours asking if Milt had gone to the devil yet, but he actually seemed to be travelling the other way. He even went to the banker and arranged to send his former wife a small allowance. He wasn't compelled to do this, but said he was better satisfied to do it.

The improved manners of Milt Sayer actually became the talk of the town during one hot-weather period when there was a lull and porch parties talked of little else that summer. He had always paid his debts after a fashion, but he became prompt and an old junk shop he owned started to make money. There was even a contest between the banks over his account, and when the State Savings won over the First there was some criticism of the methods employed by the winner. One day a man who knew Milt rather better than the rest of us said to him:

"I suppose that now you are single you'll be taking notice again."

But Milt didn't seem to be amused. He became serious and said something about his better nature being roused. People didn't understand that remark for a time, but admitted it was true. Wherever he went you saw one or both of his sons and they improved as much as their father. Both were doing well in school and during the summer vacation they worked round the junk shop.

It was along in the winter following the summer when Milt was the town's sensation and about a month after he said his better nature was roused when he did the most surprising thing. He arrived one evening on 38, the accommodation train, accompanied by his former wife, to whom he had been remarried the day before. About all he would say in explanation was that he thought he would like it rather better that way; and after that people dropped him, except that they watched narrowly to see how the experiment came out. Some thought they would get along all right since Milt's better nature had been roused, but others had their doubts.

Will Marsh went into Walt Williams' grocery and bought a sack of apples. Walt not only helped Bill eat them but invited every one who came in to have an apple out of Bill's sack. Walt has been the victim of tasters for years, and was getting even.

BELLE DAVISON

The school-teacher, Miss Belle Davison, very gentle, womanly and popular, reached forty-three without a love affair, and was a credit to her admirable sex in every way; few had ever lived in the neighbourhood who were equally liked.

But one day a scamp of a fellow began paying her attention, and she became madly infatuated with him; she ran after him as madly as a girl of seventeen ever chased a sweetheart; she violated her own rules, one after another, and the neighbours were shocked.

Not that she actually did anything wrong; the astounding thing was that she fell violently in love, and was as sentimental and foolish as a girl. It was pitiful, tragical; and the scamp upon whom she lavished her affection didn't appreciate it, but married another woman. Belle Davison is so thin and unhappy now that meeting her on the street is as depressing as a funeral.

ANDREW HACKBARTH

Most of the old-timers came to this county in 1854, when the land was opened to settlement. Among the number was Andrew Hackbarth, a likable man, except that he did not get along with his wife. We heard he had been a member of the legislature in the older country he came from; and we knew he was a worker, though the trouble with his wife bothered him and rendered him quiet.

I never knew what their differences were, though I can attest Andrew was a very decent man during the many years I saw him nearly every day. But his wife told the most terrible tales about Andrew. I have been hearing hard tales about men all my life; Mrs. Hackbarth's assortment on her husband was the worst of all; there was no viciousness of which she did not accuse him. He never said anything in reply, and about all people ever knew was that, so far as they could see, he was a good man.

Andrew's wife finally left him, going to a distant state. But she would not give him a divorce, though she often came back, usually appearing first at the county seat, where she began some sort of suit against him. Then she would appear in his neighbourhood, and tell her stories on Andrew. What pleased her

most was to meet him at church or other public place and tongue-lash him, but Andrew never said a word; he took it all, and hoped she would go away. Which she finally did, greatly to the relief of everybody; but within a few months we would hear again that she was in the county seat consulting her lawyer.

This kept up until both were old and worn out. Then she died, and we heard they had a daughter with whom the mother had been living. Then the daughter commenced annoying Andrew with suits, as her mother had done, but this was finally settled by the daughter's coming to live with Andrew.

The daughter had never married, and was about fifty years old when she appeared to care for the father in his old age. Some were suspicious from the first; they said she looked like her mother, and acted like her.

Andrew lived in a six-room house all on one floor, and the first night the daughter was there she noticed that Andrew slept with the window curtain of his bedroom up. The daughter said she thought it was a peculiar way to do; that she always put down the curtain when she went to bed.

Andrew patiently explained that he was accustomed to that way of doing; that he was an old man, and somewhat restless, and liked to look out at the stars while lying in bed at night, before going to sleep.

He thought that would satisfy her, but when he

awoke next morning his curtain was down again.

This provoked Andrew, who was honestly trying to get along with his only remaining relative, as was his duty; so he said to his daughter that his curtain being up needn't bother her, she was at liberty to sleep with her curtain down if she liked, and should be satisfied. He therefore hoped she would let his curtain alone.

But she didn't; next morning Andrew's curtain was down; she had slipped in after her father was asleep, and lowered it.

The controversy went on a month. Every morning Andrew's curtain was down, and Andrew pleaded with his daughter to let him have his way in just one thing. He said he had submitted to a good deal from his womenfolks, and begged for peace. But the daughter was determined that the curtain in her father's bedroom should be lowered at night, and at last he drove her out of the house.

She went to the county seat and promptly began another lawsuit, which continued so long and was so expensive that Andrew was ruined. Both have been dead several years; I bought their quarter at the administrator's sale, and added it to my land.

JOE STEVENS

We haven't a daily paper in our town, but really don't greatly miss one, owing to Mr. Stevens, the milkman. In summer he delivers morning and evening, and there is little he doesn't know. Indeed we sometimes think that, like the editors, he invents things on dull days, to interest his customers.

And what wonderful experiences Joe Stevens has had! He must have forty customers, but nothing ever happens to any of them he can't beat. Ez Hawkins caught two mice in a little dead-fall trap intended for one, and thought it very wonderful; but when Mr. Stevens came round with the milk he didn't pay much attention to the incident; he said he had caught two mice repeatedly. So Ez started in to find something Mr. Stevens had never heard of.

Mr. Stevens moved to town from the country, to retire, but didn't like idleness so well as he thought he would, and began selling milk. At first he sold to only a few, and packed it round, but after a while he was compelled to get a horse and wagon, and a boy to help him.

But his wife liked idleness. Her ambition while on the farm had been to move to town and buy a surrey; and when she attained these two ambitions she

wouldn't go back to work; she said she had slaved enough.

And the longer she was in retirement the stouter she became; people noticed, when she was out driving on Sunday, with the milk-wagon horse attached to the surrey, that she completely filled the back seat. Mr. Stevens drove, but was so small that many people didn't notice him and thought he was busy with the cows.

Ez knew Mrs. Stevens wouldn't help with the cows, saying she had done her share; so after that when Mr. Stevens came with the milk Ez began telling about a wonderful woman who lived over on Mule Creek. She made nearly five hundred dollars a year, Ez said, with her chickens and cows, and turned it over to her husband; in fact, was glad to do it, as she wanted to help.

Ez noticed that Mr. Stevens took an interest in the Mule Creek woman, so he quit talking about trifling things like catching two mice in one trap, and told about the woman who worked hard but always looked well in spite of it, and was cheerful and content. Mr. Stevens was a great talker, but was silent when Ez talked about the wonderful Mule Creek woman; it was almost indelicate, the interest Mr. Stevens took in the other woman. The neighbours knew about Ez's stories, and complained that he kept Mr. Stevens so long hearing them that they were compelled to wait for milk, and made breakfast or supper late.

The men in the neighbourhood were amused over Ez Hawkins' joke on Mr. Stevens; they, too, had heard him brag of having had more wonderful experiences in everything, so some of them used to go over to Ez's house Sunday morning and wait round until Mr. Stevens appeared at the kitchen door, when Ez would go out and tell him more about the Mule Creek woman. In fact, three of the men in the neighbourhood were in Ez's kitchen listening when Mr. Stevens finally confessed defeat.

Ez told Mr. Stevens that the Mule Creek woman's husband went to town the day before to attend a lodge gathering, and that his wife told him to have a good time; not to worry in the least about affairs at the farm. Then she took the team and her two boys, Ez said, and put up four tons of hay. When the Mule Creek woman's husband returned home at night his wife had all the chores done and was dressed up to welcome her husband. She expressed the hope that he had enjoyed himself in town, and had an appetizing lunch ready for him.

This story greatly impressed Mr. Stevens and as he moved away from the kitchen door he said to Ez, in hearing of the three men in the kitchen: "Well, that beats my time."

GLADYS HART

Until six months ago there lived in our neighbourhood a beautiful creature we all called The Princess behind her back. Though apparently the daughter of George Hart and his wife Margaret, The Princess was very superior to her surroundings. The Hart boys worked, and were of considerable cash value to their father, but were never clothed in fine raiment as was their sister Gladys, who was also sent away to school one term, and spent her time when at home mainly in practising music lessons.

Every one seemed to take pleasure in doing something for Gladys Hart; I confess I did, and was ashamed of my ugliness and worldly habits when in her presence.

We never knew much of the man she married, except that he came from a fine family and was an unusually capable business man, considering his age; and I think this came from The Princess. But we never wondered that he fell in love with Gladys Hart; she was really beautiful and witty and superior.

Everybody was expected to give a social function of some kind for The Princess, and we all did our duty promptly; we were as humble as George Hart himself when it came to giving her a proper send-off;

the whole neighbourhood was disturbed during a busy season.

And what a fuss was made when she was finally married! George Hart couldn't afford the wedding he gave her, but there was no other way out; such a beautiful creature just naturally demanded a big wedding, and George submitted. It cost George and the boys a year's work at least, as the caterers and dressmakers came from the city; nothing came from our local trading point except the society reporters from the papers, who gave a rich flavour to everything they wrote of the affair.

And how the women and girls worked in decorating the church! Busy, hardworking men were neglected, and frequently prepared their own meals.

The guests marveled a little at the bridegroom's kin; they didn't live up to the advertising, but the wedding was finally over and The Princess departed for her new home, accompanied by the usual foolishness at the depot.

But the manner in which The Princess dropped out of sight and mind after her marriage was the strangest thing I have ever heard of. I had supposed Mrs. Hart at least enjoyed the preparation for the wedding of her daughter, but a perfectly reliable woman informs me she heard Mrs. Hart express weariness and say, "Never again!"

Another perfectly reliable witness testifies that the

Hart boys—John, Silas and William—said in the presence of their father that they were grateful to the bridegroom for taking The Princess off their hands; and they were not reproved. I myself heard George Hart say the day after the wedding, in presence of his wife, "What a relief!"

For weeks before the wedding we heard of nothing but The Princess; after it we heard almost nothing at all of her. Her parents and neighbours washed their hands of her, as the Hindus do.

I often think it is a shame we do not all miss The Princess, and are almost glad to be rid of her; but she is not entirely blameless; she overloaded us when we couldn't help ourselves.

MRS. JOE BUEY

Mrs. Joe Buey isn't seen in the stores once a month, and then she buys only calico and gingham and muslin which she makes up herself. After she appears on the streets the people feel uncomfortable for days—she looks so frail, overworked and wretched. People can't understand how any one is able to live and look as bad as Mrs. Joe Buey does. She has worn the same hat summer and winter for years and her appearance gives one the queer feeling of hearing a strange noise and thinking maybe it is a ghost. People know there is no such thing as a ghost, but they used to think there was no such woman as Mrs. Joe Buey.

It is generally said Joe treats her better than their children do. Joe is a teamster and works as steadily as work offers, but when not otherwise engaged he stays round home and helps his wife, which the children never do. The teacher once sent a Buey boy home from school, and next morning the boy's mother appeared, imploring the teacher to take him back. She didn't claim her son had been mistreated; she just asked that he be given another chance, and was such a picture of woe that the teacher relented. When her baby is ill she is so poor that she is compelled to take

it to the doctor's office, and Dan Sayer says the most pitiful sight he ever saw is Mrs. Joe Buey carrying her sick baby to the cheapest doctor in town, as she knows she can't get credit anywhere else.

JOHN DAVIS

A travelling man yesterday gave John Davis, the grocer, a twenty-cent cigar. John Davis has been selling cigars at his grocery store and smoking twenty years—and a good cigar made him sick.

TAYLOR WARD

It is generally said certain mean men in this town should be chased out for the general good; and Taylor Ward says that if the meanest men should be voted on all of us would get votes.

MARY RANSOM

Now that I am getting to be an old fellow, I don't mind telling about my first love affair. When a man is young he denies he ever had any love affairs. He says he is still waiting for his ideal. I confess I found mine years ago. She was a school-teacher named Mary Ransom and the finest woman I had ever seen. I not only worshipped her in secret but openly. But a cloud came over our happiness—a man named Mendenhall. The teacher used to give me notes to take to Mendenhall, and I was torn between love and duty; I wanted the money she gave me to carry the notes, and I hated to do it. I redoubled my efforts to be nice to her, but Mendenhall won. She quit teaching school and went away to a distant town to live. I have never seen her since.

They say a man soon forgets a love affair, but it isn't true. Last week a tall young man called on me and said his name was Fred Mendenhall; that his mother was Mary Ransom, my former school-teacher, and that she had asked him to call on me. I thought it was rather indelicate, sending her son in to see me.

CHARLEY GROVER

In my neighbourhood there lives a family named Grover—the mother and father and five little children. Whether I am in my room at work or sitting on the porch, the Grover children are always in evidence, since they are very active and all through the summer play outdoors barefoot, which they regard as a great privilege, except that their mother pesters them about washing their feet at night.

Their mother does not believe in letting her children bother the neighbours, so they are always at home, and other children play with them. They are the most natural, human youngsters I ever knew and, as they are healthy, they are noisy from the time they get up in the morning until they go to bed at night. Because of my open windows I know everything they do or say. When I waken in the morning the roar in the Grover yard is going full tilt, but I only smile at it, because I am fond of the Grover children. If I see company arrive at the Grover home I soon hear one of the children say to the mother: "Where are we going to sleep tonight?" And next day I hear one of the Grover children put this question: "When are they going home?"

The Grover child that interests me most is Charley,

seven years old. One morning I noticed that Charley was in disgrace. His mother had dressed him in girl's clothes to punish him. This kept him in the house for a while, but soon he didn't mind the girl's dress and played out in the yard, where he was forbidden to go. Then his mother took his clothes off and thought that would keep him in the house, but in a little while he was out playing with the other children, naked.

By this time I was much interested in Charley's crime and made bold to go to the fence and ask Mrs. Grover what Charley had done.

Charley had told a story. I recommended to Mrs. Grover that she wash Charley's mouth with soapsuds and let it go at that, but she thought it best to keep Charley in the house until his father came home, when a family council would be held and Charley's fate decided.

Mrs. Grover told me of Charley's disgrace. With some other boys he had gone to a pond in the neighbourhood and fallen in. When he returned home his mother asked him how his clothes became wet. And then Charley said he was up at his Aunt Hannah's and in getting a drink out of the well bucket had accidentally spilled some on his clothes.

Charley had been warned not to go to the pond, and I feared it would go hard with him when his father came home. I have known Charley's father all his life, and though a good, steady man now he was

tougher as a boy than Charley is. You know how parents take on about a child who has told a story. We all tell them. But how we are shocked if children are caught at it. We say a great big black man or a policeman will get them.

I asked Mrs. Grover to put Charley in my charge for half an hour and, as she knows I like the children, she let me have him, first putting his sister Maggie's dress on him. Then I led him over to my porch and lectured him.

"Charley," I said, "I don't think it very wicked to tell a story, since I've told more of them probably than any other man in the world, unless it is your father, who is coming home presently to whip you. But there is a reason why you shouldn't tell stories and it is a very important one. Who told on you?"

"Grandma Grover," the boy replied.

"There you are," I said; "a woman told on you. And I venture to say that within an hour after you told this story you were caught."

Charley corrected my figures—he was caught in twenty minutes.

"That's the reason why you shouldn't tell stories—you are always caught and you are always caught promptly. The average with me has possibly been above twenty minutes, but I have always been caught. And it is usually the women who tell on me. Women are more truthful than men and boys and they seem

to take special delight in catching them in stories. I know you didn't like to worry your mother by acknowledging you had gone to the pond. Women don't know knee-deep from over your head.

"You couldn't have been drowned in that pond if the other boys had thrown you in and sat on you. You knew that, but your mother didn't, so you should have told her the truth. You should always behave as well as possible, since that is really the easiest way, but above everything else don't tell stories. The reason I have already explained—you are always caught. Millions of boys are telling millions of whoppers every day, but every wretch is caught; if not by his grandmother then by his sisters; if not by his sisters, then by some woman in the neighbourhood. Young as you are, you must have noticed the pleasure your mother, grandmother, sisters and the neighbour women take in catching you. But you will never know how a woman can actually enjoy herself until you marry and your wife begins catching you. Promise me you will never tell another and I'll do what I can to get you off. I see your father coming home to dinner."

The boy promised, and we went over to his father, whose name is George Washington Grover, but people called him Wash.

"Wash," I said, "our friend Charley is in trouble. The women have caught him in a story and they are waiting for you to whip him. Of course I know you

never told one, and I confess I am myself greatly shocked at Charley's conduct. But he has promised me he will never tell another, and if you will let him off this time I'll go on his bond."

"Well," Wash said, "I'll go in and talk to mamma about it."

And he led the boy away. I knew mamma was all right, and in a few minutes Charley appeared in his own clothes.

The advice I gave Charley I give you. Don't tell stories, because the women will always catch you.

THOMAS LANE MONTGOMERY

Bill Hart is a rich man, largely for the reason that many years ago he got the notion in his head that he wanted more land.

That was his passion—land. He thought of it during the day, dreamed of it at night, and went in debt, paying out as fast as he could; and now he is rich. Bill's neighbour, Thomas Lane Montgomery, also had an ambition many years ago. It was to print a book of poetry. He finally succeeded, but his book was not profitable. A man who bought land in the early days could not avoid becoming rich, but there is no possibility of a man making money by publishing a book of poetry.

OLD GEORGE BENNETT

Old George Bennett, who had been a local character for years, was found dead this morning in a wretched old house where he has lived alone for a long time.

He had long been separated from his wife and she had made him a good deal of trouble, owing to some flaw in their settlement. She lived in Ohio with their only daughter, and every little while appeared here and started a new suit of some kind against him. And in addition she made the most terrible charges against him, which the neighbours repeated, though they themselves knew nothing against the man. He has never been a burden to any one. Somehow he has managed to get along. I frequently met him hobbling to and from the shop where he worked at his trade. I inquired among his associates and they all spoke well of him. They gave him work when he was able to do it and said he was a good workman. For two or three years he had been aging rapidly and occasionally been ill. His wife died a year ago, and old George had had peace since then, but with it he had illness, old age and poverty.

But he did not want for anything during his last illness. Six months ago his daughter, who lives in

Ohio, came to see him. When she walked into his wretched home I heard he said: "Well, Mary, here's where your father lives."

Just that—no complaint of neglect. And his daughter burst out crying. She had been hearing from her mother that he was rich and would do nothing for them because of meanness.

His daughter was not well off herself, but she did a great deal to make her father more comfortable. And after she went away a number of us sent him all sorts of things and said they came from his daughter Mary. He had become almost blind lately and I pretended to read letters to him from his daughter enclosing money in my care and making suggestions for his comfort. The neighbour men did it, but old George will never know. And the kindness of his daughter Mary always pleased him. The women said they supposed the old wretch should be taken care of in spite of his meanness, but the men contributed without comment of any kind, except that they had known him many years and knew no harm in him.

I shall always think less of gossip because of my acquaintance with old George Bennett.

Something must be done about the band. For four years it has been practising twice a week at the schoolhouse, and at least that often Glen Barker has taken up a collection to pay for new horns, new uniforms, new drums and so on.

Glen Barker doesn't play in the band. He is the manager and devotes a good deal of time to the position. He never meets a citizen that he doesn't talk band finances and intimate very broadly that the town has no pride and no enterprise. He says the band plays in other neighbourhoods and advertises us. His favourite expression is that the band has put this town on the map.

"What?" the manager screams to all of us with pathos in his voice. "Let the band go to pieces?"

Nearly every citizen is a craven coward, he has been abused so much for not doing more for the band; though all of us have done as much as we could afford to keep the organization together.

Last week the band played for the grocers' picnic and those present say its playing reminded them of a charivari. Instead of advertising us it causes us to be made fun of. We have long feared that the band didn't play very well, but it seems it can't play at all.

Glen Barker, the manager, said to one critic: "Why, our band has twenty-five men! Mighty few country bands have that many."

To which the critic replied: "The larger a band like yours the worse it is. It wouldn't be near so bad if you had only seven or eight members."

And how Glen Barker, the manager, has pleaded with us to make one more effort to keep the band up to its full membership of twenty-five!

So we must do something about the band; and I am of the opinion that the calamity long dreaded by Glen Barker, the manager, is imminent.

HARVEY KING

Harvey King is hopelessly ruined at the age of thirty-six, though he comes of an excellent family and had every opportunity to become a useful and successful man. He attended school twelve years, but belonged to mandolin clubs and the school fraternities and wasted so much time that he would have been better off had he been learning a trade.

Soon after he became of age he married a good girl and was placed in charge of a profitable business through the influence of relatives, but he soon ruined it by neglect. He was given another chance, but this time he not only ruined the business by neglect but overdrew his account and was only saved from disgrace by his relations raising a considerable amount of money.

This has been his history ever since. He has been given opportunity after opportunity and neglected them all.

Had this young man been brought up strictly as a boy he would have become a useful man, as his father was. But he was reared in the shiftless manner too common in this town and his ruin is the result.

He had a very much better chance than the average and has made a failure because he was not properly

controlled as a child. He did nothing until he was almost of age, and depended on his father. Finally his father died, and the modest fortune he left was soon dissipated under the management of an indulgent mother.

Harvey is bitter, but he has not been the victim of the slightest injustice. He has not lacked the widest liberty and opportunity. Indeed he was born with a golden spoon in his mouth in a golden age. He was kindly treated—too kindly treated. He had the advantage of good schools and a good home. He is a wreck today because he was not properly brought up as a child.

VIC WALKER

It was lately decided that Vic Walker would be better off in the insane asylum. I happened to be in the court room when he was brought in and first realized that people thought him crazy. I never saw quite so much astonishment as he displayed when told that the charge against him was insanity.

"What?" he indignantly said. "Me crazy? Why, I know more than the rest of you!"

I suppose we all have that notion—more or less.

A committee of farmers from the Deer Creek neighbourhood lately investigated the city scales. The farmers have been noticing for some time that the city scales gave a little better result when they had a load of hogs to sell than the scales used by the buyer, so they had an investigation in which they invited George Coleman, the mayor, to assist.

But it turned out all right. The members of the committee were fair and reported unanimously that the difference was probably due to optimism.

George Coleman says the man who operates the city scales has no interest in a load of hogs except that he hopes the owner will get as much as possible for it. So he is liberal in giving his figures; he gives the farmer a shade the better of it, so far as he can.

Same way when the farmer returns with his empty wagon. The city scales man makes the wagon weigh as little as possible, since it costs him nothing to be a good fellow.

But it is different, George Coleman says, with the man who buys the hogs. He wants the load to weigh as little as possible and the empty wagon to weigh as much as possible, and by the time optimism has worked four times on one load of hogs there is a difference in weight that is remarked by the seller when he compares the two tickets.

JOE WARD

I was lately making a little automobile journey and met Joe Ward, a high-priced man. We were passing through the town of Centerville and stopped a moment to inquire the road to Fairview.

It happened that the man we addressed was Joe Ward himself, who said he was just about to leave for Fairview and would show us the way if we would give him a ride.

So he sat beside the driver and turned round and told us about the farms we passed. He knew every farmer on the way; how his crops were turning out and many other interesting facts, for this man was a clerk in the New York Store in Centerville and had been so employed nine years.

When we came to a crossroad he would say "Straight ahead" or "Turn to the right" to the driver and then tell us something of interest about his work in the New York Store. It seemed he was a very popular clerk; so popular, indeed, that the proprietor of the Boston Store, the principal opposition, had long wanted him.

"But I said to him frankly," Joe Ward explained, "if you get me you'll have to pay a man's wages. I'm no cheap skate. I was born over on

Cow Creek and no citizen of that neighbourhood would think of going to Centerville without trading with me."

"Here," I thought, "is a very high-priced man."

I began wondering how much would induce him to leave the New York Store. And he proceeded to tell us—he couldn't keep a secret.

"Besides the pull I have on Cow Creek, my grandfather is the leading farmer out the Fairview way and everybody knows I control the best trade round Fairview. So I says to Persinger, of the Boston Store: 'If you get me you'll get the best, but you'll have to pay me. I'm human like everybody else; if you pay me I'll work for you and do you all the good I can, but we might as well understand each other first as last—if you get me you'll have to pay me. I'm no amateur. If you get me you'll have to pay me twelve dollars a week.' "

But it developed before we reached the next town that Persinger, of the opposition store, wouldn't stand an innovation like that, so Joe Ward got out at Fairview and said he was going back next morning to resume his work at the New York Store.

EMANUEL STRONG

Emanuel Strong is sick and probably won't get well. The thing that worries him most is his poverty. He has always made enough, but lived up everything as he went along and at his death his family will have nothing. He has five children to school and dress, and Emanuel and his wife have been so much devoted to them that they have not had much themselves. Three years ago there was an excellent opportunity for Emanuel to buy a business of his own, but he had no ready money and a banker picked up the bargain.

When I called on Emanuel lately to see how he was getting along his wife surprised me by saying she had ruined her husband by living too well and too carelessly. Emanuel always wanted to save, she said, but she paid too much heed to the demands of the children and everything they earned slipped away. I never before heard a wife make a similar statement.

ED MARSH

Ed Marsh married Maggie Woolson three weeks ago, and they went to live with Ed's mother, who is a widow and lives alone. This week Ed and his wife went to a home of their own. Yesterday I met Mrs. Marsh, and remarked that Ed and his wife had left her.

"Yes," she said, "they thought they would be better satisfied in a home of their own." Then she thought awhile and added: "And me, too."

MRS. MARK THOMPSON

What eventless lives most women lead! Mrs. Mark Thompson confesses that this was the only unusual thing that every happened in her life:

When a girl of sixteen she lived in a town in Iowa, and has never yet become entirely reconciled to a farm. In going to take her music lesson she was compelled to pass a boarding house where a number of students lived, and, as she passed, the students used to tap on the window. But she never once looked up.

Mark Thompson cannot understand yet why his wife did not travel another street when on her way to take her music lesson. Possibly the good woman enjoyed her little adventure, and the consciousness that nothing could make her look up when the bold young men tapped on the window.

W. T. HAWLEY

Some men complain about the queerest things. W. T. Hawley, of this neighbourhood, does not like to be called Will; he says it sounds effeminate. Nor does he like to be called Bill. He says that sounds too rough.

Some old maids do not seem to mind it, while others never get over being touchy. A single woman was lately grossly offended by Lawyer Bailey. She sold a piece of woodland to John Hart, and Lawyer Bailey drew up the papers in which he recited that the seller was single, as required by law. When she saw this she was very angry. "Everybody knows that," she said; "why bring up that old joke in a deed?"

GEORGE LAWRENCE

Husbands have different ways of asserting themselves. Some storm round and talk rough, usually about dry-goods bills, for there never was a husband who could understand why his wife needs so much voile. Probably most husbands jaw at their wives in private, but a few discuss their grievances at table in presence of the children. When a wife says to this sort of husband: "S-sh! It is no subject to discuss before the children," he will reply: "I don't care if they do hear."

But George Lawrence regulates his wife very quietly. When anything goes wrong at his house he never says a word, but his right eyebrow goes up like a tent. After his eyebrow has been up a day or two, he takes it down again, matters having been regulated to his satisfaction.

Mrs. John Hart's sister-in-law, Mrs. Mary Cain, of Indiana, came to visit her, and Mrs. Hart and Mrs. Cain went down town one pleasant afternoon to look at the stores. On the street, Mrs. Hart met a town woman she knows and talked to her quite a while. Mrs. Hart loves to talk, and the other woman is also noted for a perfect stream of conversation. Finally Mrs. Hart remembered her sister-in-law and looked round, with a view of introducing her, but she had gone! Mrs. Cain, it seems, became angry because Mrs. Hart did not introduce her to the town woman and, going to the station, took the first train home. Mrs. Hart looked all over town for her sister-in-law and was much distressed, but her husband doesn't mind it. He says his sister always was the touchiest thing that ever lived, and is rather enjoying his wife's efforts to make up.

GEORGE HART

George Hart was loafing in his kitchen during a recent rainy day, when his daughter Mary said: "Mother's bread is ready to go in the oven." "Well," Mr. Hart asked her, "why don't you put it in?" And then the daughter laughed at him. "No woman ever permitted another woman to decide when her bread was ready to go in the oven." This amused George and he called upstairs to his wife: "Mary says your bread is ready to go in the oven. Shall she put it in?" "In just a minute," his wife replied. This amused Mr. Hart more than ever, and he watched developments. In five minutes his wife came downstairs, looked at the bread critically and didn't put it in the oven for half an hour. "It's lucky," he said to his daughter afterward, "that we waited."

People probably live as long as they ever did. I believe old Mr. Neal is as old as Methuselah—if he would admit it.

BILL ALVORD

Every two or three years Bill Alvord returns from the city to permit us to shake his hand and be proud of him because he has a job paying eighty-five dollars a month. But we're not so glad to see Bill as he thinks. After people haven't seen a man for three or four years they don't care if they never see him again.

MARTHA WENDELL

Being an only child, Martha Wendell was notoriously spoiled by her parents. She lately married Tom Mason, and as Tom comes of an old-fashioned family where the children were compelled to mind he refused to have a spoiled wife, so he insisted on certain things and his wife carried them out. But she did nothing a wife should not have done. Indeed she became an object lesson to shiftless young married women, since she was useful, sensible and a good wife and home maker.

But I wish you could have heard the fuss the neighbour women made! They said Tom Mason was a slave driver, though he asked nothing of his wife she should not have done, and she confessed to me only lately that she loves her husband and is happy. The bride's own mother says her daughter was spoiled and that her husband has made a woman of her. But the neighbours are not satisfied.

CHRIS HALLECK

The women won't believe it, but I once knew a widower named Chris Halleck who didn't like to marry the second time. He did it, but the day of the wedding he looked as though he had been called upon to attend his own funeral. He loved his first wife, but something caused him to marry again. Maybe it was the fact that he had two little girls he could not properly care for. He tried housekeepers, but couldn't get on with them and finally began going with another woman. He was married one evening without his little daughters knowing it. Then he returned home and spent the night with them. For hours he tried to tell them, and was afraid. But along toward morning he screwed up his courage and told them, and they clung to him and sobbed and the father sobbed with them.

I don't know that a man ever died of a broken heart—possibly no woman ever did either—but Chris Halleck died of something very much like it. His marriage proved to be a mistake. His second wife wasn't kind to his little girls and Chris couldn't stand that.

JOE ALLEN

I celebrated my nineteenth birthday (said Joe Allen) by enlisting in the First Vermont cavalry. We were in the Shenandoah valley, under Shields, in the spring of 1862, but later were merged into Pope's army, and suffered defeat with him at the second battle of Bull Run.

After varying experiences as a soldier, which included Fredericksburg, one day we started to join Meade's army at Gettysburg. My impression is that we marched thirty miles beyond Gettysburg, and then marched back again, following Hampton's cavalry. There was a general impression among the men that a big fight was to take place soon, but we did not know where.

Our corps approached Gettysburg on three different roads. I was in the middle column, and the first intimation I had of fighting was encountering a field hospital, where there were two or three hundred wounded. We arrived on the battlefield in the evening of the second day's fighting, and it happened that I never saw the town of Gettysburg at all.

We were at once moved around to the right wing of Meade's army, and, when we arrived there, struck Lee's left wing. There was a fight lasting until 11

o'clock at night, when the Confederates retired. Then we were moved to the extreme left of our army, a distance of twelve miles, arriving about day-break, just as the third day's fighting was beginning. We were immediately ordered to charge, and carry a line of hills, which we did, and took up a position in advance of our main line. We remained there skirmishing until four o'clock in the afternoon, when word was passed that there was to be a charge.

Little Round Top was almost behind us, and we charged away from it. There was a Texas regiment in front of us, lying down behind a stone fence, and we charged towards it, accompanied by three or four regiments of infantry. The firing was terrific, and the infantry wavered, causing a delay of the cavalry. We started at almost the same time that Pickett charged, and probably our charge was to draw off as many of the enemy as possible from the attack on Little Round Top.

During the delay I have spoken of, and while the First Vermont cavalry was left almost alone in an exposed position, Kilpatrick, the division commander, rode up, and had some sharp words with Farnsworth, the brigade commander, who was leading us. I was close to them, and heard what was said; Farnsworth protested against the hopelessness of the charge, saying the First Vermont had been cut to pieces already, and that the men should not be sacrificed. Farns-

worth said he would lead the charge, but that Kilpatrick must take the responsibility.

And then came the order: "Forward!"

We rode at full gallop toward the stone wall behind which the Texas regiment was lying. The Texans had ceased firing, and we knew they were waiting to pick us off at closer range. Our men tried to set up a cheer as we rode toward the fence at a furious gallop, but we could not do it: we were so wrought up from expecting the volley at short range.

I saw the first man who fired: a young fellow on the right, and I heard an officer curse him for firing too soon. A second later came the volley, but nearly every bullet went over our heads, as we were charging up hill. Then there was a cloud of smoke, and we came to a halt within a few feet of the stone fence, while some of our men in advance tore it down. It is a wonder we were not all killed, but the smoke was so thick that the enemy could not take accurate aim.

Our men had only revolvers, and it seemed to me there were twenty musket shots to our one. I fired five times at a bunch of infantrymen ahead of me, but I do not know that I hit any of them. Finally I saw some of our men urging their horses through an opening in the stone wall, and followed.

In five minutes we lost sixty-five out of 312 men. Every time a man near me was hit, I could hear the pat of the bullet. I saw several of my companions

cringe and start when hit, and a frightened look came into their faces. A young fellow I had known all my life was struck, and he was riding so close to me that he fell over on my horse's neck. I straightened him up in his saddle, and told him to hold on as long as he could, but he soon fell off on the other side. His place in the ranks was on my right, and his horse remained at my side throughout the charge.

I had a pistol and a sabre, and fired the pistol as rapidly as I could, but I doubt if we disabled a dozen of the enemy altogether. They stood behind rocks and trees, and fired at us with deliberation and care. I chased one fellow who appeared in front of me, intending to cut him down with my sabre, but he jumped behind a tree, and I hurried on to join my companions. As I did so, I saw the man spring from behind the tree, and fire at me. There was the greatest confusion, but I heard his shot, and the thud of the bullet when it struck; he had fired at me, and struck my horse in the neck. The horse was a big bay called "Abe," in honour of the president; but he kept on going, and I supposed the wound was not serious, although it bled freely.

We were gone an hour on that charge; we had passed entirely through the enemy's lines, and were compelled to cut through again to reach our own. I could liken it to nothing except getting into a hornets' nest.

It was while we were in this situation, riding at full gallop, that some one told me that General Farnsworth had been killed.

We could only locate the Confederate lines by puffs of smoke. A clump of trees ahead of us would look quiet and peaceful until we came opposite, when out would come puffs of smoke, and we could hear the whistle of the bullets. A friend of mine named Marv. Mason, who rode ahead of me, had his horse shot under him. The horse fell dead, but Marv. went over its head, and struck on his feet. He did not stop an instant, but kept on with the regiment on foot until he caught a horse, which he mounted, and rode safely into our lines.

Somewhere during the charge, a man rode by me with his leg shot off by a cannon ball. Just above the stump some one had tied the sleeve of a coat, to stop the bleeding. I think seeing this man, with his pale, frightened face, is my most distinct recollection of Gettysburg. I could not tell whether the man was a Federal or Confederate. There were two men with him who seemed to be his friends, but the friends appeared to be as frightened as the wounded man, and riding as madly toward safety.

At last we reached our old position, when we heard that Pickett's charge had failed. We remained quiet until dark, everything indicating that the battle was over, when we were ordered to dismount in a meadow,

and told to get some sleep. The heaviest rain I ever experienced was falling; I saw soldiers soundly sleeping that night who were half-covered with running water.

At four o'clock the next morning we were routed out, and ordered to saddle at once. Then I discovered that my horse was too badly wounded to go; he was very stiff, and could not get up. He was a great favourite in my company, and there were many expressions of regret when I was compelled to leave old "Abe" behind. But there were plenty of other horses without riders, as a result of the charge of the day before, and we were soon on the move. When we rode away, old Abe was lying down, and I had no idea he would ever get up again.

Private soldiers always manage to find out what is going on. We knew we were in pursuit of Longstreet's corps train, and hurried all day toward Emmetsburg, without catching sight of the enemy. In the evening we halted for a few hours; and while I was boiling coffee, I heard a cheer from some of our men, and who should come staggering into camp but old Abe! We gathered around him, and some fed him crackers, while others bathed his neck.

When the bugle sounded to fall in, old Abe tottered to his place in the column, but we soon started on the keen run, and left him behind. I glanced back and saw him standing, looking after us; I looked

again, and he was following us slowly, and with difficulty.

In an hour, just after dark, we struck the rear guard of Longstreet's corps train, as it was starting up a mountain. Three Michigan regiments dismounted, and crowded along the narrow road. Our regiment was next to the dismounted men, and we were to charge through and stampede the train as soon as we found an opening.

I never saw such a display of fireworks as I saw all through that night. Our men toiled up the mountain, firing as fast as they could, and the Confederates fell back, stubbornly resisting our advance. Just at daybreak we reached a level spot on top of the mountain, probably fifteen acres, where there had been a summer hotel in the days of peace. Here we cut our way through the rear guard, and took after the wagon train.

There were two pikes leading off the mountain, and the train had divided; we took the Smithburg pike, to head off and capture the section going that way. The mules attached to the wagons were running away down the hill; but we had to go by them, which we did, yelling and firing pistols. The train we were after was two miles long, and I saw many wagons go over the bank into the gulch below. Most of the wagons had wounded in them, and as we tore along we could hear the cries of the unfortunate men.

Some of them were looking out, and some of them jumped. Many of the drivers were shot by our men; others deserted their teams, and the scene was frightful.

But we finally got ahead of the train, and stopped it. Then we went to burning the wagons and killing the mules. The wounded were carried to the side of the road, but we had no time to look after them. We halted there several hours during the time hearing that the other train and five thousand prisoners had been captured.

Just before we started on again, old Abe came walking into camp. How he discovered that his command had gone down the Smithburg pike, I cannot imagine, but there he was, and he at once took his place among the horses of my company. He had probably seen the fighting all through the night before, and followed us through the woods when it must have seemed to him that every limb on the trees was shooting fire. He was not far away when the charge took place on top of the mountain, and when he decided to follow the Smithburg pike, knowing by some instinct that his comrades had gone that way, he must have seen sights and heard sounds that were as terrible as any in the history of the war. He passed the entire train while the wagons were being burned, the wounded dumped out, and the mules killed, until he found his old friends of the First Vermont.

His story now came to be noised about, and cavalrymen from other commands came up to look at him, all of whom offered kindly suggestions. That night we were at Hagerstown. I heard cheering half a mile away, and knew it was old Abe coming in. I rode over that way, and met him. He followed me to our camp, where I fed and watered him. He seemed to be getting better, but was very stiff in the neck.

At midnight we hurried on, leaving old Abe lying down. There was no long halt for several days, but whenever we stopped to rest, and snatch a little sleep or a mouthful of food, old Abe would come in on us. Sometimes he would strike the pickets a mile from his regiment, but always found his way to us with unerring certainty.

There was fighting almost every hour of the day, and half the time old Abe must have been among the enemy; he certainly came through their camp every time he found us, for we were in advance, and travelling the same road: our purpose was to burn certain bridges on the Potomac, and the Confederates were trying to prevent our doing it. But old Abe knew which crowd he belonged with, and managed to find us every night. Finding the horses of my company, he took his place with them, first having a tremendous row with his successor.

Every day he got in a little earlier, and for awhile in the morning would travel by my side in the column,

always looking for an opportunity to get a kick at the new horse I was riding; but we were making a forced march, and he would soon drop out. He was known as "The First Vermont Straggler," and every day the soldiers of other commands would call to us, and ask how old Abe was coming on, to which we replied that he was coming on very well, and would surely be in at the surrender.

One night we halted at 11 o'clock for six hours, and I worried because old Abe had not arrived. But when I mentioned the matter, it happened to be to a soldier who had been on picket duty, and he said old Abe came along the road within half an hour after he took his place, and had spent two hours with him, begging for crackers out of his knapsack. Old Abe was becoming a good deal of a vagrant, and would loaf with any of our command, although when I went out to saddle, he was usually with the horses of our company.

I think he kept with us after that, usually marching by my side, though he would break ranks occasionally, and go after water, or nibble grass. Finally, at the end of the tenth day, I put my saddle on old Abe's back once more, and rode him until I was mustered out as one of Sheridan's cavalry. When I left the camp for good, I saw a recruit riding old Abe, and the recruit was being congratulated on having fallen heir to about the best horse in the service.

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